

INSIDE
Wrestling
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THE MAGAZINE THAT'S NOT PC

- 💀 **A DQ VIEW OF 2001!**
- 💀 **COWARDLY HARDYS!**
- 💀 **HEROIC SHANE DOUGLAS!**

CHRIS BENNETT

THE UNCROWNED DQ CHAMPION

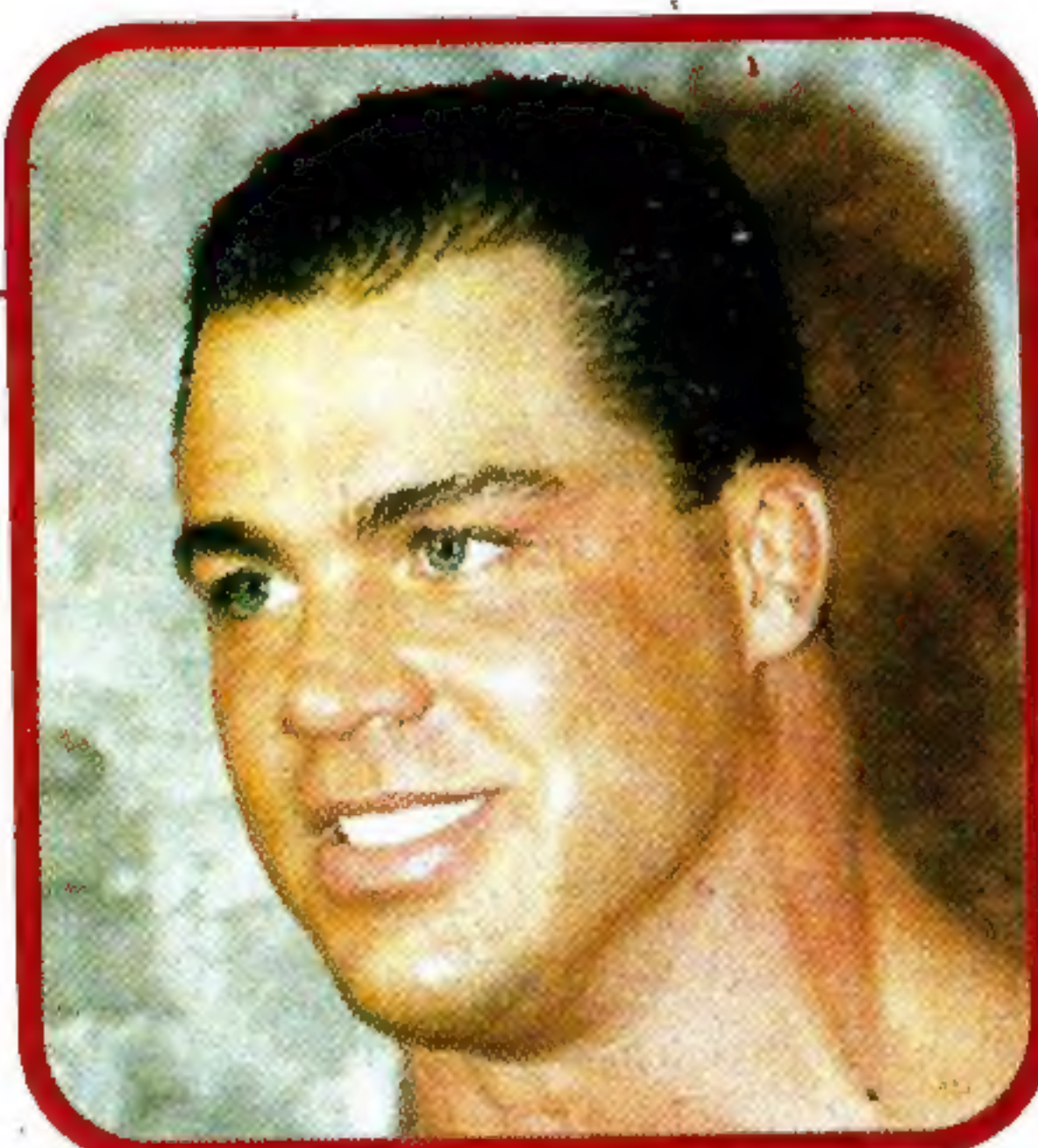
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talkin' trash



KURT ANGLE

"You know, Triple-H is nothin' but a no-good spousal abuser, and I can't believe that a woman as strong and powerful as Stephanie McMahon has remained married to

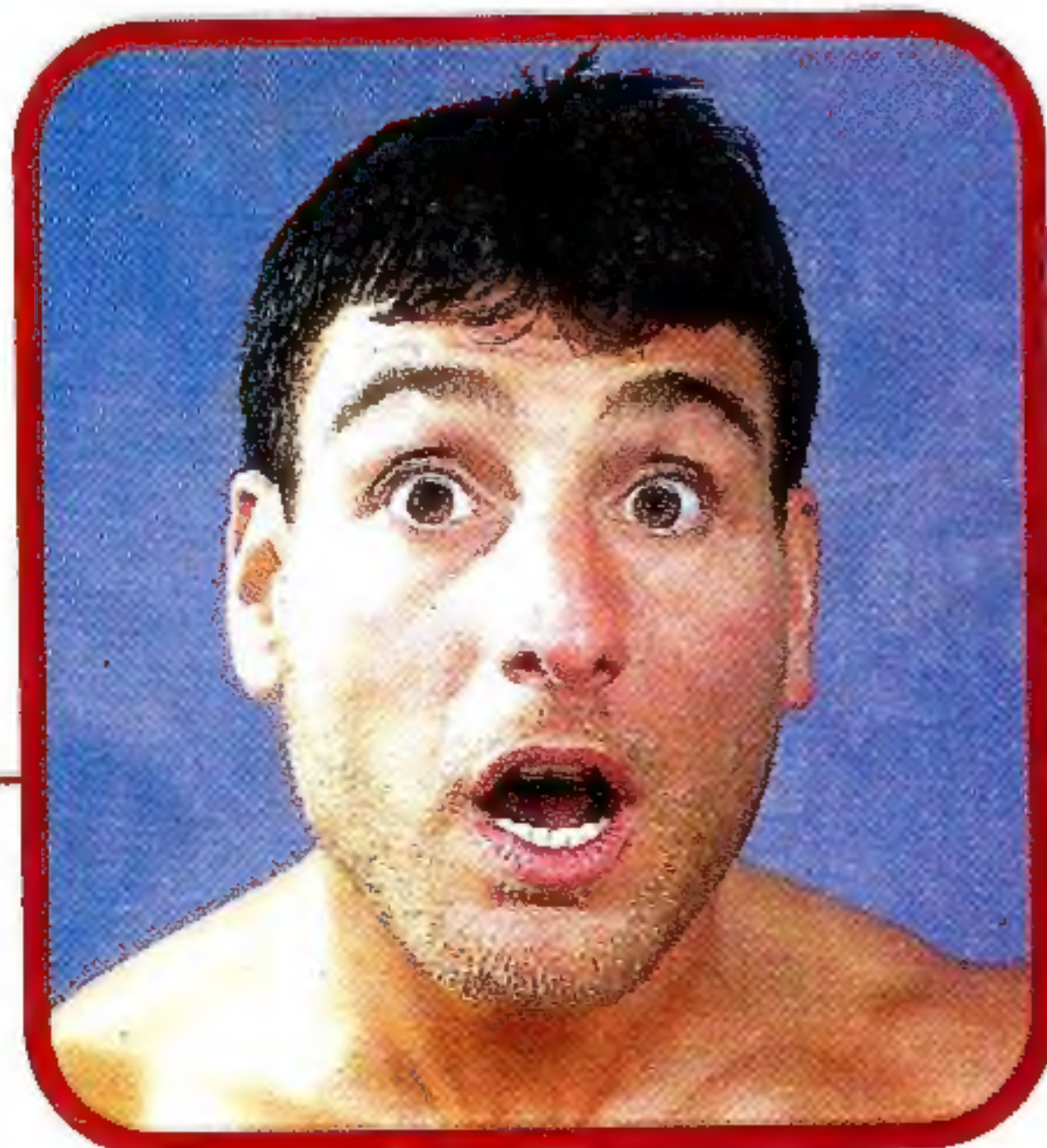
the guy. Besides, who

the hell does Triple-H think he is? So what if he married the boss' daughter. Anybody in the WWF could have kidnapped Steph, drugged her, and then gone through a drive-thru chapel with her. It's true. It's true. Anybody could have done that. Hunter was just the first to think of it."

LITTLE GUIDO MARITATO

"The night Tony Mamaluke and I won the ECW World tag team title, nobody expected us to be the champs for long. The fact that we've kept the belts goes to show we're more than just a flash in the pan. Who is going to beat us for the belts, anyway? Mikey Whipwreck and Yoshihiro Tajiri?

Come on, those two can't even talk to each other, let alone game plan for a match with the FBI. Roadkill and Doring? York and Matthews? We're too damn good for all of 'em."



DISQO

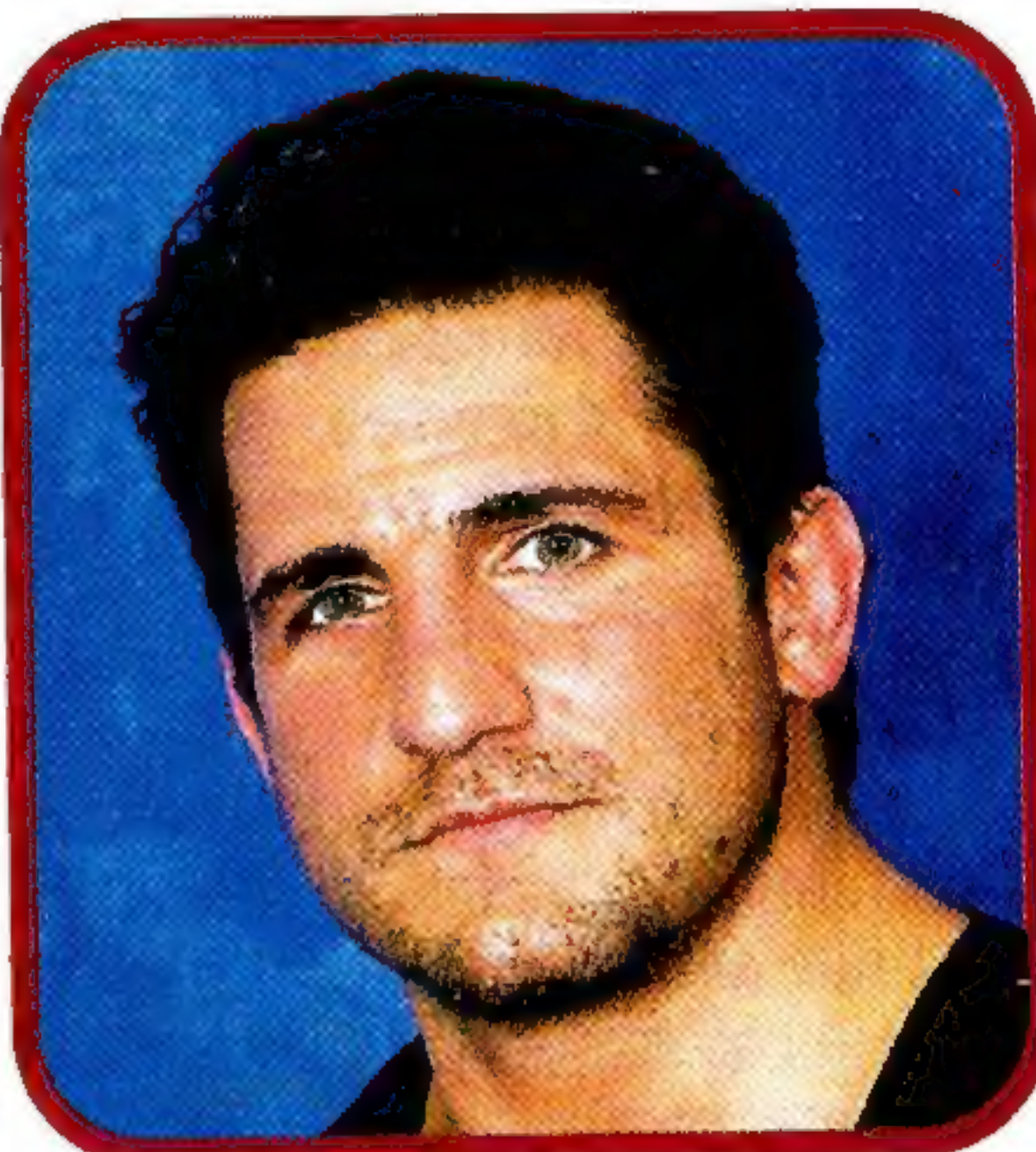
"Honestly, I wasn't getting any respect as a member of The Filthy Animals. See, Konnan, Rey, Juvi, and even Tygress are just jealous. They knew, like all of you

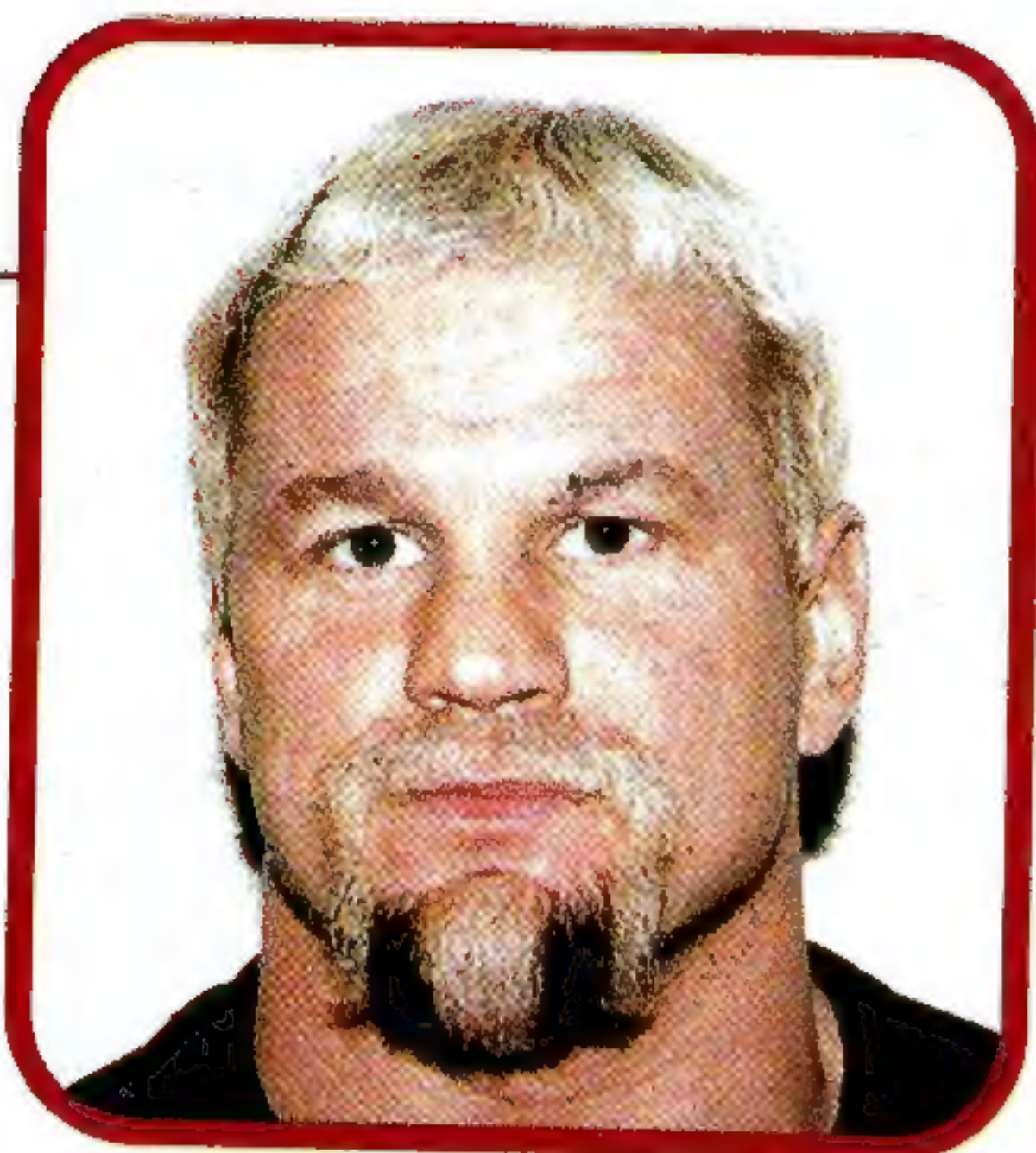
did, that I was the core

of the Animals, that without me, the Animals would amount to zilch. But they got too jealous to have me around, and look what's happened to them. Rey and Juvi have lost the title, and Konnan is using a four-year-old catch-phrase. They're as dead as a damn Thanksgiving turkey."

RAVEN

"Despite my preaching the same mantra for years now, nobody understands where I'm coming from, why Raven is such a tortured soul. Maybe nobody really cares to know, and I guess that's fine with me. There's been nobody there for me my entire life, so why should things change now? I've always been poor and miserable; my life has always been a modern-day version of a William Shakespeare tragedy. My lot in life seems to be the lot of a miserable out-cast."





SCOTT STEINER

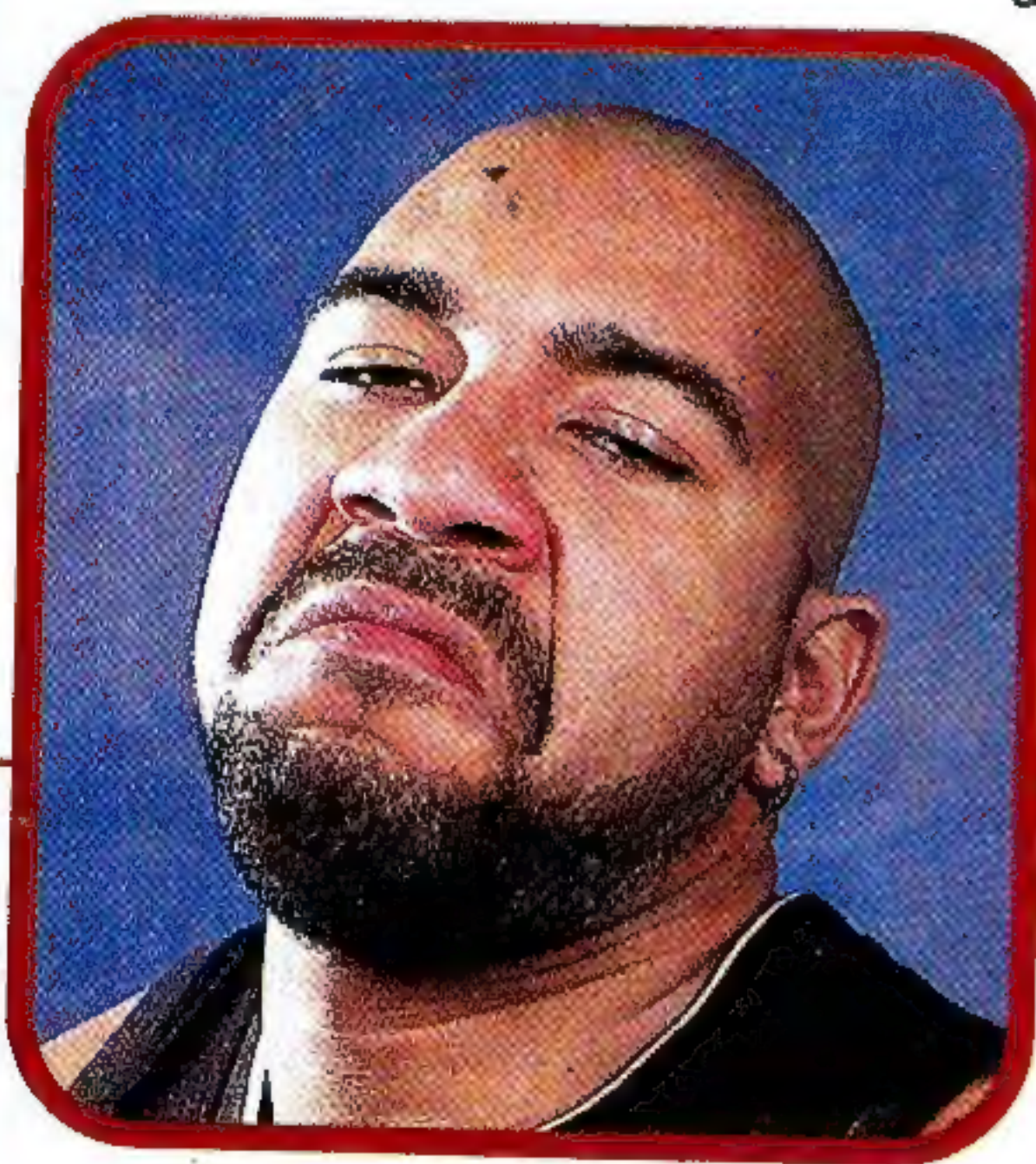
"What do I have to do? Do I have to break some punk's scrawny little neck? Do I have to take someone and break their damn back? Listen, I don't give a rat's ass; I'll do all that crap

if I have to. Bill Goldberg can't hide from me forever. And all the victims that fall in my wrath—their blood's on him! You got that! Their blood's on him! Until he stands in the ring one time and decides to fight me like a man, I'm going to make life miserable for every wrestler in WCW."

ANGEL

"How come DeVito and I ain't go no respect yet, Pah-Pah? Da Baldies drove New Jack outta this business, and right now he might never wrestle again. We're beating up on every punk we want to beat up on, but still we can't get us a World tag team title match. Everyone in ECW is afraid of us,

afraid of our staple gun, and afraid of the blood that we spill. Maybe we're too tough for ECW now, but that ain't going to stop us from killin' everyone who gets in our way."



TERRI

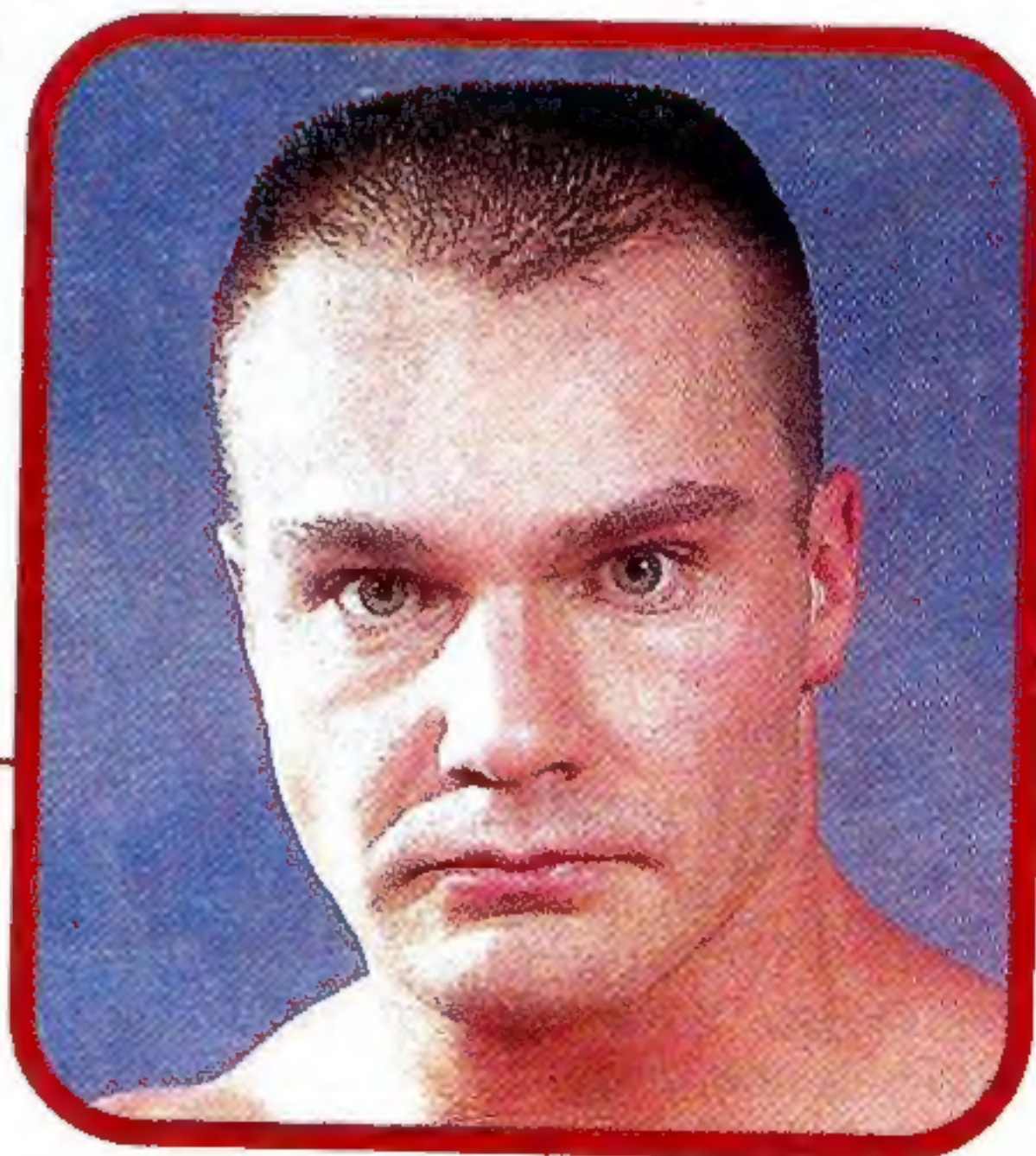
"Everybody thinks I'm tied to managing Perry Saturn, but come on, I'm not that stupid. Perry knows that if he doesn't start winning some matches and collecting some titles, I'll

get rid of him faster than you can say 'horny little she-devil.' I'm already thinking that I might have hung around him too long. But he amuses me, so I think I'll keep him around a little while longer. I have my eyes open, though. Someone like me can never have too many options."



LANCE STORM

"It's not easy representing an entire nation, but that's the job I've decided to take on. It's certainly a large responsibility. Look what it did to Jim Duggan. For years, he was one of America's staunchest defenders. Any time anybody had a bad word to say about the U.S., there was Duggan, ready to take him out. Well, I'm the Canadian version of Jim Duggan—just better. I'm so good, I actually got Duggan to switch sides. 'America the Beautiful' my ass."



the truth

By Brandi Mankiewicz

WHAT THE HELL'S going on here? That's right, I'm as confused as you are. I always thought there was a vast conspiracy among the so-called journalists at London Publishing to hide, to obfuscate, and to otherwise ignore the existence of our publication.

They've tried to kill it countless times, but we keep coming back. Our voices are too righteous to be silenced.

One common tactic employed by this publishing company is to constantly change the name of our magazine. Eight years ago, when we made a hostile takeover of *Wrestling*

93, for example, that mag became known as *Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker*. As if it weren't confusing enough that our name changed with each successive year, London eventually decided to change the name altogether to *Wrestling Bad Guys*.

Eddie Ellner, our guiding light at the time, hated the *Bad Guys* title. He thought it implied rulebreaking was a bad thing. The marketing people said it would help us target the correct audience. "Oh, well," Ellner said. "Let the suits and ties have their way. We'll keep on destroying their world from the inside."

Wrestling Bad Guys broke all the rules, so to speak. Instead of pandering to wrestling's fan favorites and satisfying the self-righteous elitists at *PWI*, *WBG* ripped into the saints of the day, including Hulk Hogan, Bret Hart, and Lex Luger. *WBG* was bad before bad was cool.

Now it's all the rage.

Of course, those nimrods at London Publishing (myself excluded, of course) couldn't wait to pull the plug on our dark enterprise. *Wrestling Bad Guys* was no more. But the demand was too strong. The outcry was too fierce. The threats were too frightening.

So the shallow London editors came up with the next best thing. Bring back *Wrestling Bad Guys*—but tuck it inside *Wrestle America*. That would appease rulebreaking loyalists while turncoats like Steve Austin, Bill Goldberg, and The Rock graced the cover. To them, it was like putting the nutty aunt in the attic. Sure, London,

(Continued on page 100)



Before *DQ*, *Wrestling Bad Guys*, and even *Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker*, there was Dan Shocket, the originator of rulebreaking journalism. Though Dan is no longer with us, his memory helps to drive our editorial conscience.

rulebreaker's insider

By Freddie Ellner

(Editor's Note: We proudly welcome the great Freddie Ellner back to London Publishing. Freddie will call in his column every four months via cell phone. That's because his grammar isn't very good and he's a freewheeling type of thinker. Here's "Rulebreaker's Insider," from Freddie's mouth to our receptionist's ear.)

FREDDIE'S BACK! YEAH! For all those people wondering where "The Fredster" has been for the past five years, the answer is this: I've been livin' life! Some of you didn't have the privilege of reading my columns in *Wrestling Bad Guys* four or five years ago, so let me introduce myself.

My name is Frederick J. Ellner. You might remember my cousin Eddie Ellner, who was an assistant or associate editor, or something like that. He was the rulebreaking columnist at *PWI* for about 10 years and used to be editor of *Bad Guys*.

I know *PWI* has been swamped with letters asking where the Ellners are. As far as my cuz goes, I'm not sure. After sprinkling Grandma's ashes on home plate after the Yankees won the World Series a few years ago and making the front page of the New York *Daily News* for his efforts, Eddie disappeared from the scene. He stopped sending stories to *PWI* and dropped out of sight. I figured he moved to Hollywood to be a screenwriter. Who knows.

As for me, I finished high school and have since been traveling around the country doing odd jobs. Since I'm a trendy guy, you shouldn't be surprised that I really dig the Internet. I've been working on some top-secret locker room confidential stuff. I'll be rolling in the bucks any day now.

Anyway, I was doing my thing on the Internet when I got an instant message. It was Brandi Mankiewicz. She asked if I was interested in writing a column for *DQ*. I



I'll tell you, I'd take Stephanie McMahon over any of those other plastic bimbos any day. And not only is she a hottie—she's Vince McMahon's daughter. That means she's rich!

told her I was down with that. I still watch wrestling on the tube, and since starting this column, I've gotten in touch with some of my old contacts throughout the wrestling world. So let's talk about other stuff going on. I hate to talk about myself. I'm just that kind of guy.

(Continued on page 102)

the "so-called" voice of reason

By Stu Saks

IHAD THE advantage of reading Brandi Mankiewicz' version of "The Truth" before I wrote this rebuttal. You may want to read her slanted view before you read this. Admittedly, Brandi presented her case effectively, complete with a historical perspective on rulebreaking journalism. She went so far as to suggest ways that people could incorporate rulebreaking into their everyday lives.

That is outrageous! Suggesting that employees should undermine the work environment (i.e. editors annoying their bosses) is completely irresponsible.

I've seen Brandi's type come and go in wrestling journalism. They like to be hip, chic, and cutting edge. The easiest

way to do that is to oppose everything that is good and decent in wrestling and the rest of the world. There's only one thing worse than a rebel without a cause. That's a rebel with a stupid cause! What kind of world would this be if everyone resorted to rulebreaking? It would be a madhouse, that's what.

That's why I demanded this column in *DQ*. It would be irresponsible for London Publishing to let this propaganda spew out into the public without some balance, a semblance of reason. The best way to do that is to examine these so-called heroes whom Brandi and her supporters admire. We don't have to go back in history to do it. Let's just examine some bad guys of today.

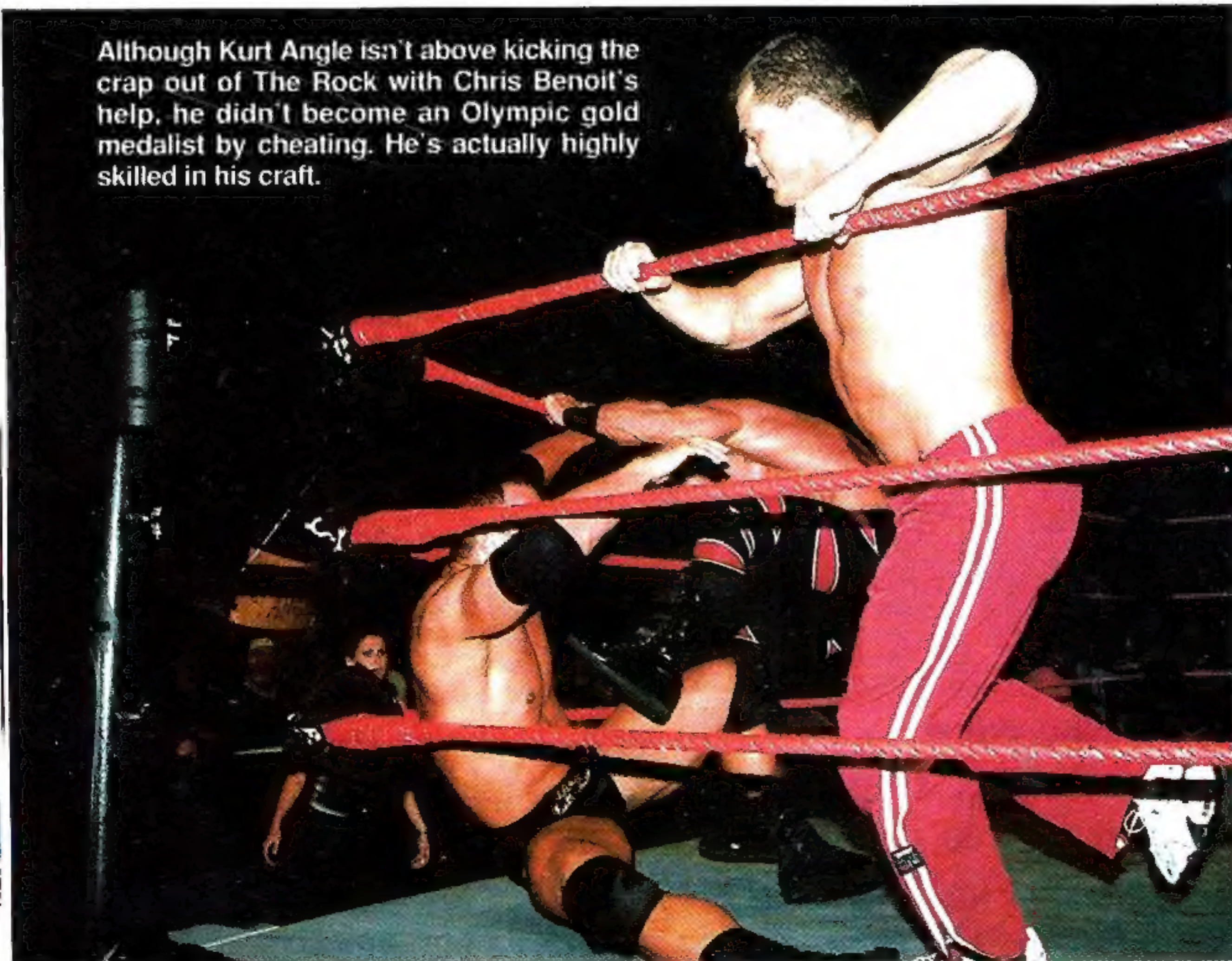
Kurt Angle. Brandi toots his Olympic horn every chance she gets. That proves the hypocrisy of these heel journalists. Angle earned that gold medal through hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. It took an enormous strength of character for Angle to achieve that goal. If Angle had cheated to win that gold medal, at least Brandi would be consistent.

I don't know what happened to Angle when he entered the WWF, but, sadly, he's bought into the same notion as Brandi. He thinks shortcuts to success are just as gratifying as taking the high road there. Wrong, Kurt and Brandi. If he beats The Rock for the WWF World title, he'll be a champion without his most important "I": integrity.

Scott Steiner. He used to be an honorable man, before this "Big Poppa Pump" nonsense. He became an All-

(Continued on page 104)

Although Kurt Angle isn't above kicking the crap out of The Rock with Chris Benoit's help, he didn't become an Olympic gold medalist by cheating. He's actually highly skilled in his craft.

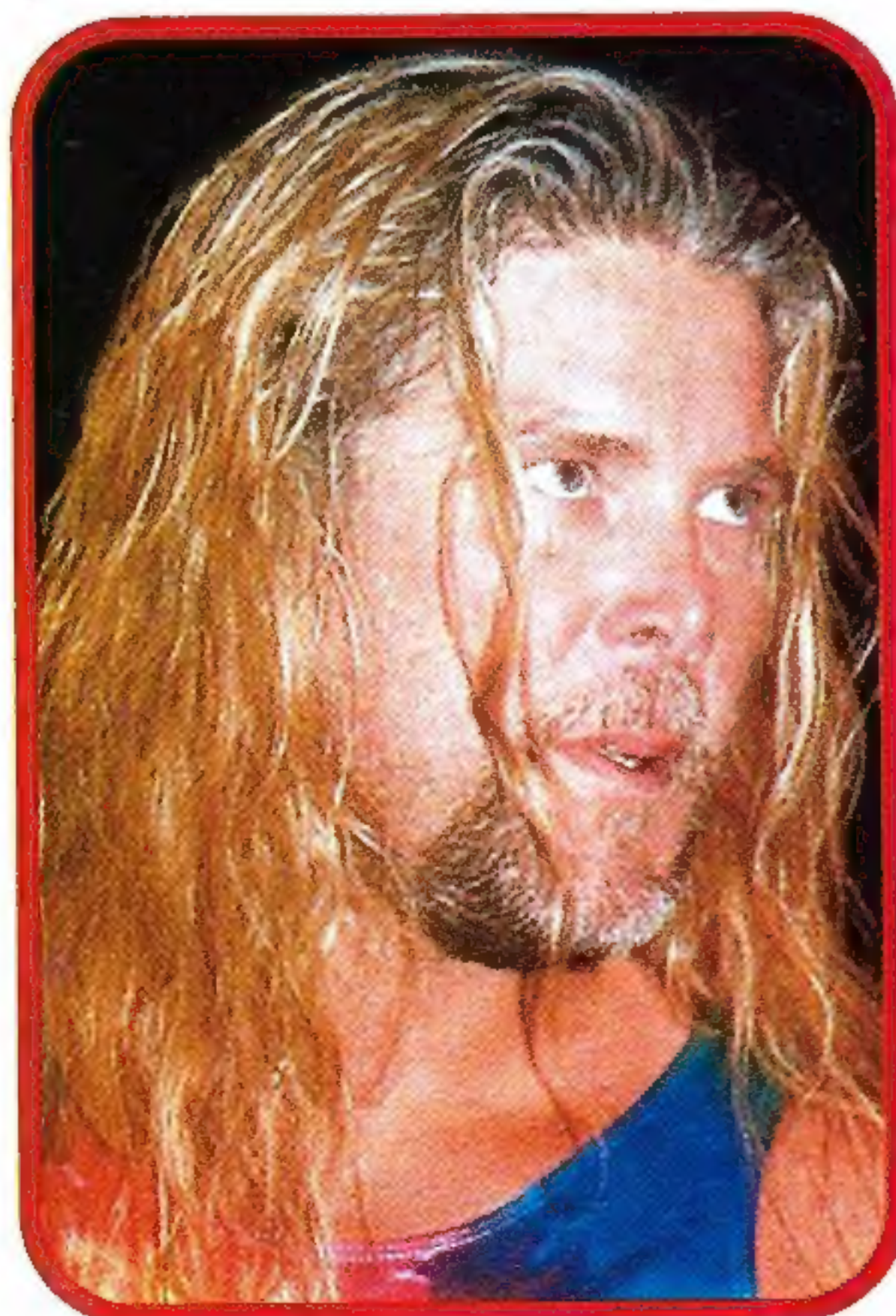


wimps & warriors



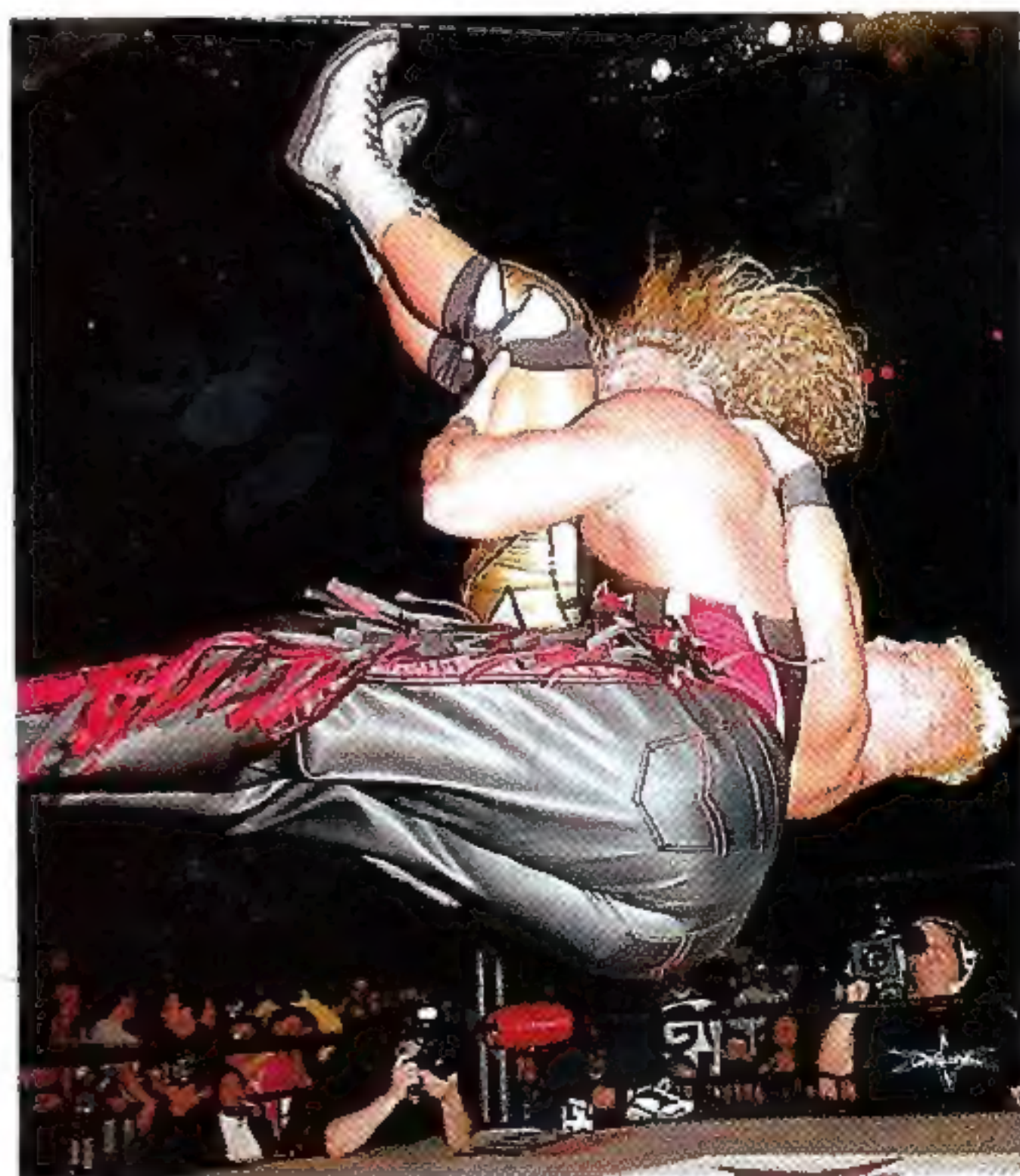
ROB VAN DAM IS A WIMP.

Ever since Van Dam returned from an ankle injury this summer, he's been a gigantic letdown to his blindly loyal fans—and we at *DQ* can't get enough of it. First, in his long-awaited pay-per-view comeback, RVD lost to perennial carpetmat Jerry Lynn (ignore the fact that Lynn defeated Justin Credible for the ECW World title—that was a fluke and a half!). Then, instead of going after the TV title he claims to love so much, he began tagging with mighty mite Kid Kash. Their dream of a World tag team title win ended when Lynn pinned RVD yet *again*—this time in ECW's World tag team title tournament. And when Van Dam finally set his sights on the TV title, Rhino gored and pinned his sorry ass at Anarchy Rulz. Oh, "Mr. Pay-Per-View," what has become of you?



KEVIN NASH IS A WARRIOR.

Forget Jesse Ventura, Hulk Hogan, and even Ric Flair. If there's a wrestler more suited to hold public office than Kevin Nash, we haven't found him yet. Nash, easily the best political player in the game today, continues to manipulate WCW stars to enhance his position in the federation. Recently, he's taken up an association with The Natural Born Thrillers, WCW's least-experienced group. By lending the group some much-needed star power, toughening them up, and interfering in matches on their behalf, Nash can deflect the criticisms of other WCW up-and-comers who claim he makes a point of holding younger wrestlers down. Now, whenever that argument is raised, Nash can let the Thrillers do his defending for him.





THE UNDERTAKER IS A WIMP.

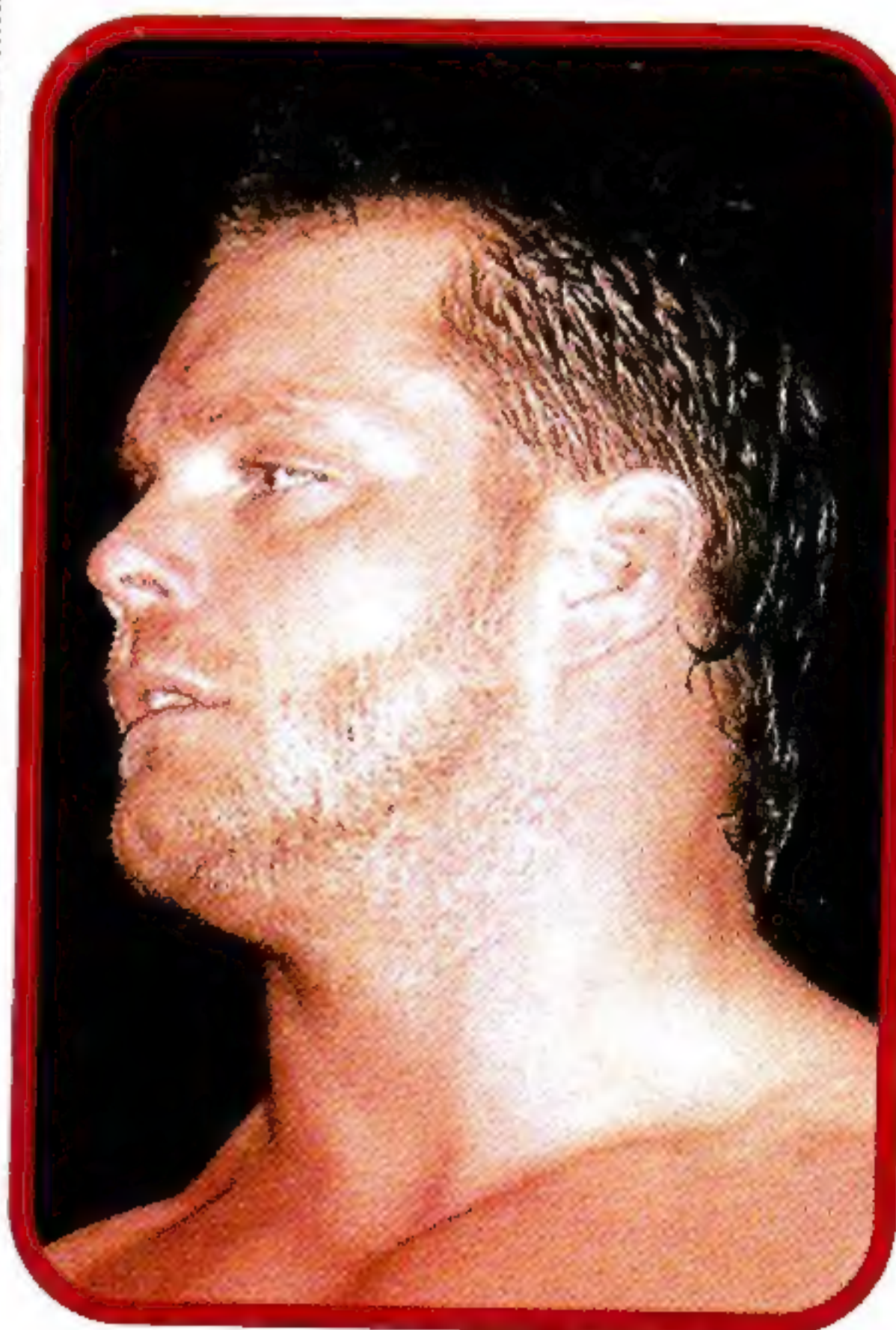
"He's here ..." The hell he is. The guy who rides a motorcycle to the ring to the blaring sounds of Kid Rock may call himself The Undertaker, but we don't really believe it's him. It can't be. Maybe he's Ron and Don Harris' missing triplet. Maybe he's just a schlub keeping the Titan bikes warm in case the bald-headed duo decide

to return to the federation. But whoever he is, he isn't The Undertaker we remember. Our 'Taker was an evil sadomasochistic genius. If he wasn't deriving his power from Paul Bearer's urn, he was deriving it from sorcery and dark ceremonies. He was Steve Austin's most ruthless foe and Mr. McMahon's secret weapon. We're hoping to see a return of "The Dead Man," but right now, UT looks more alive than ever.



CHRIS BENOIT IS A WARRIOR. What the heck is Mick Foley doing? Granted, the WWF commissioner was buddy-buddy with The Rock as part of that hideous Rock 'n' Sock Connection, but the main event of Unforgiven marked the second time that Foley restarted a match in which Benoit had already been

declared the WWF champion. At only 5'10" and 218 pounds, Benoit is already at a physical disadvantage in the WWF's heavyweight division, and Foley's antics are only making Benoit's situation worse. One of these days, "The Crippler" is just going to snap on Foley and force the commish out of retirement. Who could blame him? Even though Benoit's been ripped off two different times, you can be sure that he's not done with The Rock—and Foley can't restart every match.



before they were good

GRANDMASTER SEXAY

So many of today's greatest wrestlers were at their best when they ran afoul of the rules. But so many of them succumb to the whims of the fans. In each issue, we'll fondly look back at a star who once thrilled us, but now makes us shake our heads in disappointment

IT WAS BRIAN CHRISTOPHER Day in Memphis. It probably ranked somewhere between New Year's and Mother's Day to Tennessee natives. Brian Christopher Day was celebrated for the first and last time last

year at the WMC-TV studios in Memphis. Christopher brought a vanload of his fan club members to the Power Pro Wrestling studio, where he had set aside an entire section of bleachers for his diehard supporters.

As fans chanted his name, Christopher announced that viewers could order his action figure, beanie figure, photo card, and a lock of his hair—all for the drastically low price of \$99.95. He presented a clock, with a picture of his face on it, to someone he deemed Fan of the Year.

Ordinarily, we wouldn't have condoned Christopher's courtship of the fans. But in this case, it was more like exploitation than a courtship—and we respected Christopher for it. Though we were suspicious.

He'd been out for almost a year, recovering from a torn anterior cruciate ligament and

other complications with his knee. Upon his return, Christopher led a dual life for a while. He masqueraded as Grandmaster Sexay in the WWF, prompting cheers from the humanoids, while sparking disdain as Brian Christopher in Memphis. That gave us hope.

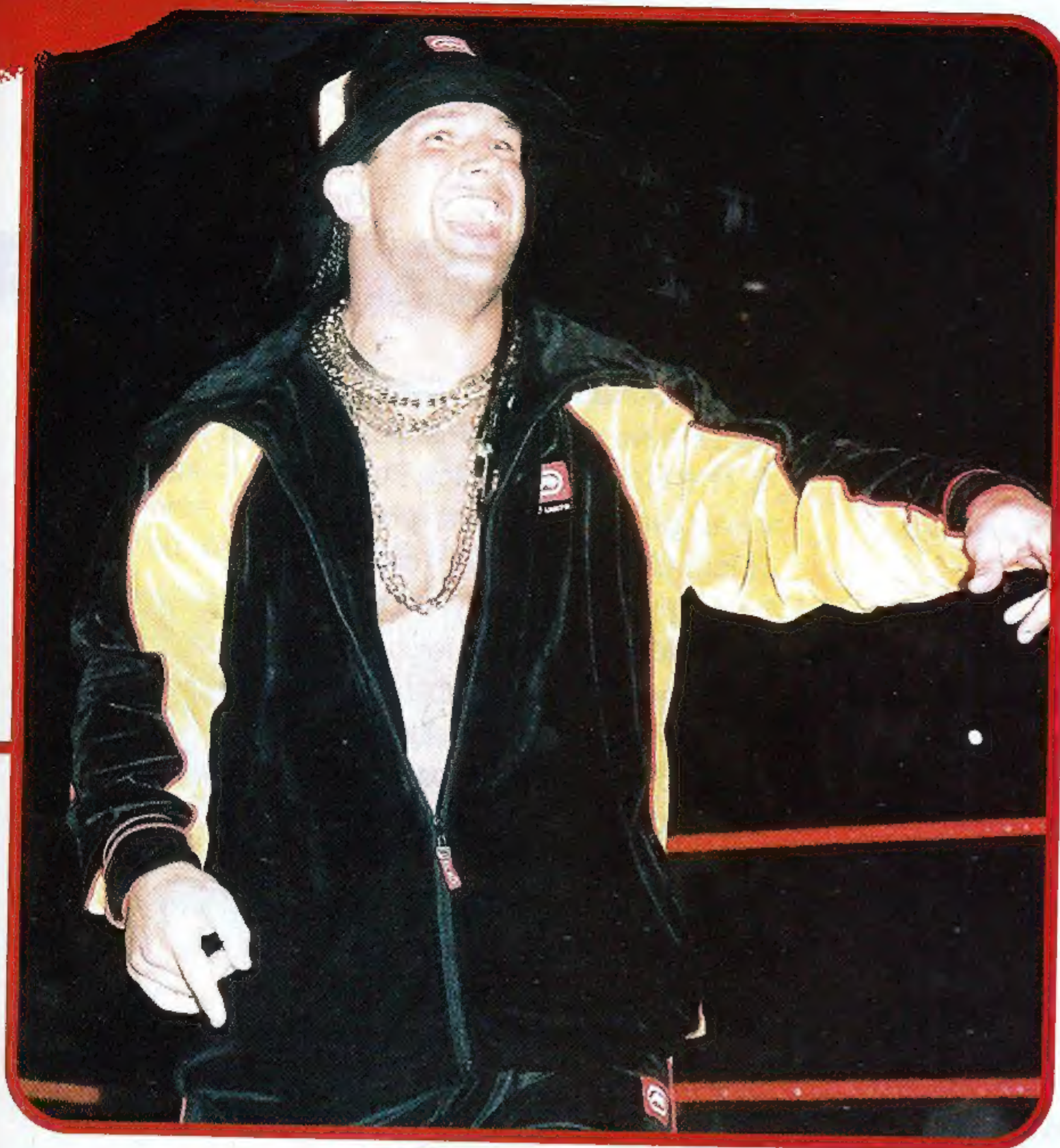
Our hopes were misplaced. When Christopher became part of Too Cool, he stopped being cool with us.

After a year of hip-hopping with Rikishi and dancing his silly little dance with Scotty Too Hotty, what does Grandmaster Sexay have to show for it? A brief WWF tag team title reign, a bum ankle, and a backward slide into the mid-card. Too Cool is no longer mentioned in the same sentence as Edge and Christian or The Dudley Boyz or even the lowly Hardy Boyz. Instead, they're mentioned in the same sentence as dolts, idiots, and fools.

Christopher's natural rulebreaking tendencies give us confidence, though. When Christopher broke into wrestling in the late-1980s, he was part of a horrid tag team called The New Kids with Tony Williams. Christopher soon turned against Williams and pursued a singles career. Will he do that to Scotty Too Hotty? We can only wish.



When Brian Christopher wrestled Jeff Jarrett in the USWA in the mid-'90s, Jarrett was the fan favorite and Christopher the rulebreaker. It's shocking to see how the years have changed both men.



Christopher defeated Tom Prichard for his first championship, the USWA Texas title, on February 10, 1992. Two months later, he beat Jimmy Valiant for the first of an amazing 23 USWA Southern titles. He had a love-hate relationship with frequent partner Jeff Jarrett. In fact, betraying Jarrett was one of his favorite pastimes.

But Christopher's brash cockiness reached its height when he challenged his own father, Jerry Lawler. The Christopher-Lawler feud continued, off and on, for several years—and Christopher demonstrated unbridled ruthlessness against his own flesh and blood. He beat dear ol' Pops for the Southern title on June 1, 1996.

Christopher debuted in the WWF one year later, when he lost to Chris Candido on *Raw*. He engaged in one of the longest go-nowhere feuds in WWF history against light heavyweight champ Taka Michinoku. Christopher

thought persistence was the key, but after coming up dry for almost a year, he *finally* abandoned the chase.

Something happened to Christopher on the road between Memphis and the WWF. It could have been the spotlight, the fight just to get noticed, or, most likely, his inability to put together a winning record. The really sneaky, calculating Christopher never appeared in the WWF. The desperate and easily flustered Christopher appeared instead. Christopher had proven himself to be Jesse James' equal in Memphis, but, somehow, he wasn't considered to be

As Too Much, Christopher and Scott Taylor were absolutely loathed by WWF fans. Christopher's annoying laugh could have made a deaf man scream for mercy, and Taylor was just so cocky. What happened?

in Road Dogg's league in the WWF.

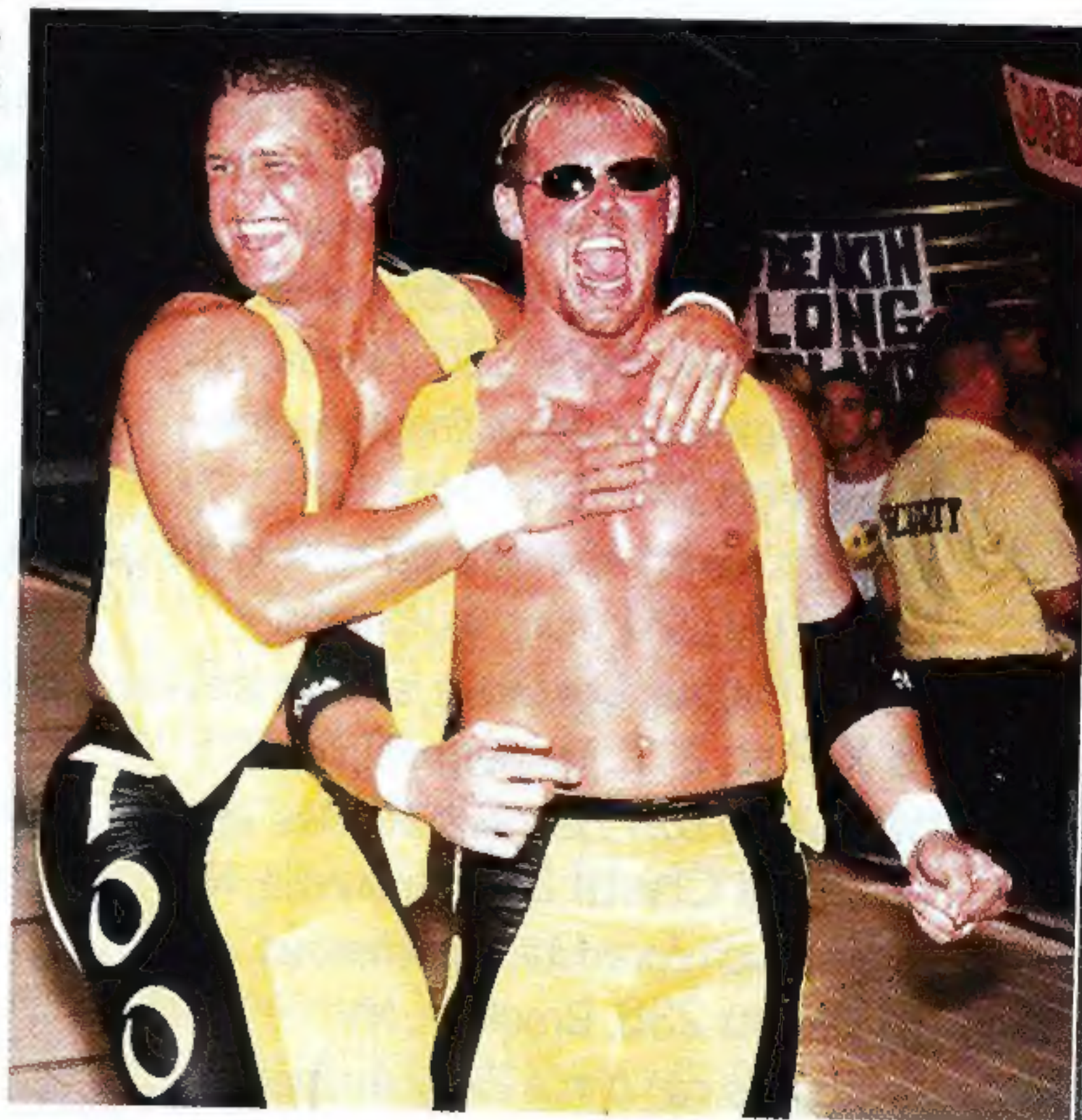
Eventually, Christopher and light heavyweight rival Scott Taylor formed Too Much. Indeed, "Too Sexy" Brian Christopher and "Too Hot" Scott Taylor were too much for fans to tolerate. Making the peons squirm was their favorite sport.

In fact, Christopher and Taylor devised Too Cool to do just that. What started as a parody somehow became a popular gimmick. Brian Christopher hasn't been seen since.

Instead, we have Grandmaster Sexay: a walking, talking, dancing joke. His thirst for fan approval replaced his thirst for success.

Brian Christopher, Grandmaster Sexay, or whatever this clown is calling himself must evaluate his priorities. Does he really want to keep popping on those goggles as he enters his 12th year as a pro? Someday, we'd love to see Christopher kick Scotty in the head as he does that stupid worm. In the meantime, we'll have to settle for his moronic hip-hop drop.

What a tragedy for a bright young prospect. Brian Christopher Day was worth celebrating. Grandmaster Sexay Day? It's not even worth putting on the calendar.



dq ratings

For period ending October 10, 2000

TOP 20

1 Chris Benoit 218, Edmonton, Alberta

You've read our cover story by now ...

2 Rhino 285, Detroit, MI

Guess RVD's not "The Whole Show" in ECW anymore

3 Kurt Angle 233, Pittsburgh, PA

Soon he'll be champ and have Steph

4 Scott Steiner 275, Detroit, MI

Don't worry—your World title reign is coming

5 Jeff Jarrett 230, Nashville, TN

Just keep swinging those guitars!

6 Lance Storm 231, Calgary, Alberta

We didn't think anyone could smarten up Duggan!

7 Kane 345, parts unknown

Even more intimidating now that he talks

8 Justin Credible 225, Waterbury, CT

Anyone can have an off night once or twice a year

9 Val Venis 250, Oakville, Ontario

Nothing wrong with expressing your opinion

10 Shane Douglas 255, Pittsburgh, PA

We love your attitude (and your girlfriend!)

11 Tazz 248, Red Hook, NY

The number-one reason to watch Heat

12 Kevin Nash 356, Detroit, MI

Maybe he could take over for Bobby Knight

13 Steven Richards 227, Philadelphia, PA

Anything you can do to censor Chyna is appreciated

14 Edge 240, Toronto, Ontario

Maybe it's time to fly solo for a while

15 Mike Sanders 230, Atlanta, GA

The guy makes a damn fine executive

16 Raven 241, Short Hills, NJ

All that suffering and he's still fighting the good fight

17 Cyrus 224, Toronto, Ontario

Making Gertner look like a jackass isn't hard, huh?

18 X-Pac 212, Minneapolis, MN

Who needs DX? He'll kick Mr. Ass' ass by himself

19 Chris Chetti 227, Amityville, NY

Never much cared for superheroes

20 Disco 238, Brooklyn, NY

An insult to call him a Filthy Animal

BOTTOM 20

1 Steve Austin 255, Victoria, TX

Great to have you back! That was a joke

2 The Rock 272, Miami, FL

At least get some new catch-phrases!

3 Bill Goldberg 280, Tulsa, OK

Are you through whining yet? Didn't think so

4 Triple-H 284, Greenwich, CT

Hanging with The Rock—that might be unforgivable!

5 Booker T 250, Houston, TX

You needed help from someone named Beetlejuice?

6 Sting 260, Venice Beach, CA

Face it—your time has passed!

7 Chris Jericho 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Hit a bit of a slump. What a shame!

8 Jerry Lynn 224, Minneapolis, MN

Hope you enjoyed your forgettable fluke win

9 Mike Awesome 285, Tampa, FL

What's worse—his wardrobe or his wrestling?

10 Chyna 201, Nashua, NH

Remember when she didn't cry all the time?

11 Steve Corino 215, Sea Isle City, NJ

Can't believe this guy sold out

12 Big Vito 265, Staten Island, NY

Would probably lose in a fight with his sister

13 Eddie Guerrero 221, El Paso, TX

Are you with us or against us, amigo?

14 Jerry Lawler 234, Memphis, TN

Might want to stay out of the ring for good

15 Rikishi Phatu 424, San Francisco, CA

Continues to make a complete ass of himself

16 Konnan 235, Mexico City, Mexico

Let us speak on this: You suck!

17 Kid Kash 230, Johnson City, TN

Too bad Rhino had to reintroduce you to reality

18 Steve Blackman 245, Annville, PA

Let's see you fight without your little weapons

19 Al Snow 232, Lima, OH

Can't we send him to Europe full-time?

20 Colorado Kid 236, Colorado Springs, CO

New NWA champ ready to get squashed by Sabu

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Choices—so many choices! Who's number one in our Top 20 this, the first issue of *DQ*? So many warriors out there were deserving of the elite position. We chose **Chris Benoit**



Rhino

because he is the official uncrowned *DQ* champion! We were tempted to go with **Rhino**, though. So much is made about how **Rob Van Dam** is the big star in ECW, that he is

the man all the ECW fans pay to see.

Well, they ought to be paying to see Rhino gore people through tables. RVD finally got his chance to prove Rhino was an unworthy ECW TV champ and blew it. He blew it in front of a pay-per-view audience at Anarchy Rulz, as he was beaten convincingly in the center of the ring. Maybe RVD can earn another shot at the belt in the next year or so. But that's a *huge* maybe.

What happened to your Latino heat? What's the deal with **Eddie Guerrero**? While most people across North America were getting all choked up as Eddie made poor little **Chyna** cry, we sat around laughing and yelling, "You tell her!" She is a glory hound. She doesn't care about him. We thought Eddie finally realized that, but then he went and started apologizing to her. They made up and everything. *Yuck!* He even started defending her against attacks from **Right To Censor**. We think **Steven Richards** and **Val Venis** might need to do a little brainwashing to get Eddie back in our *Top 20*!

Bad Guys!

THE MAGAZINE

First it was **Wrestling Rulebreaker**; then it was **Wrestling Bad Guys**. Either way, these magazines are the forerunner to *DQ* and are only for people who live their lives with attitudes. Get them from us cheap before someone tries to make them into collector's items on eBay!

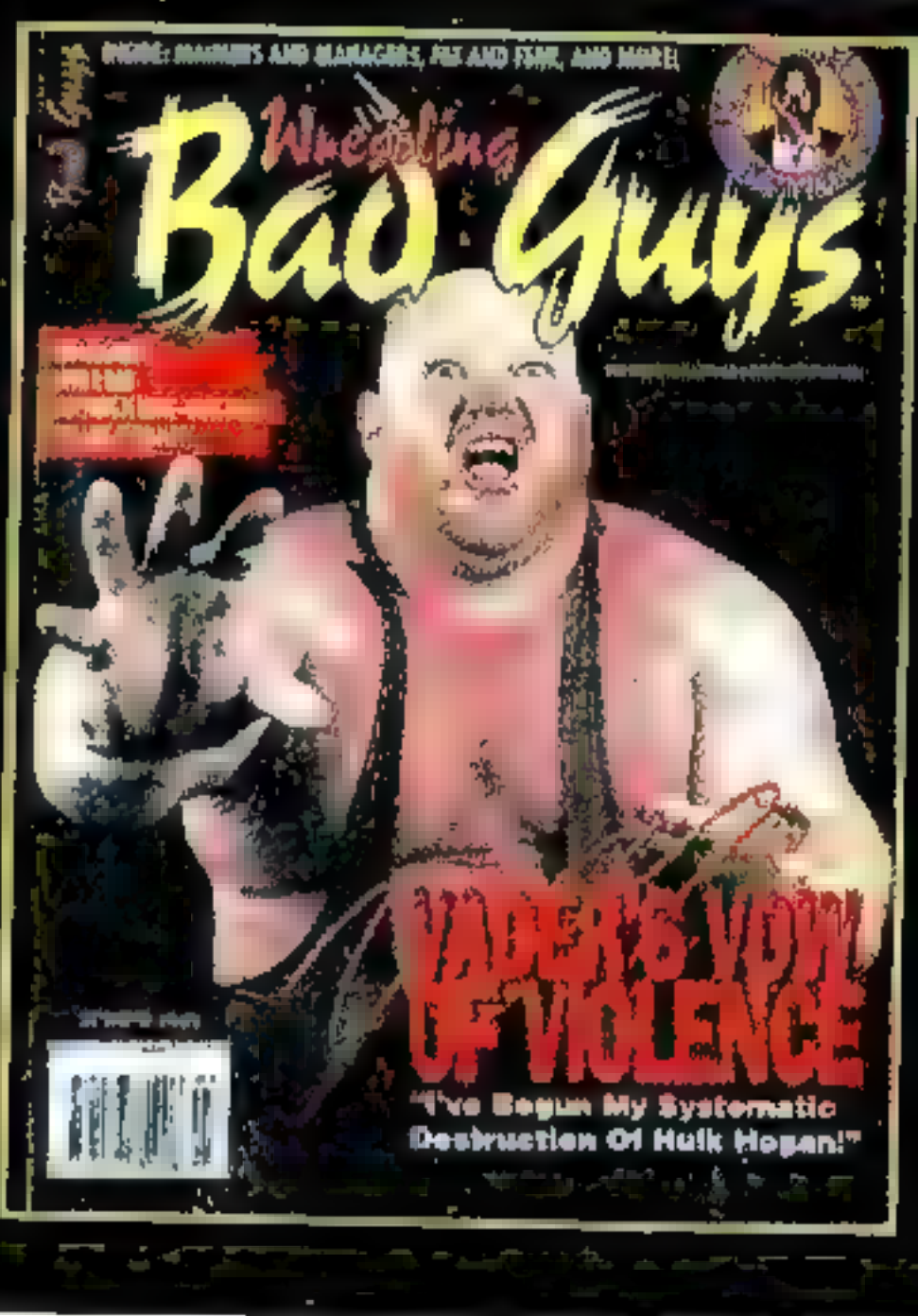
Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker (Winter 1993): **Brat Patrol! Wrestling 93 Targets The Sport's Most Pampered Players.** Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Steve Austin, Lex Luger, The Kid, Heavenly Bodies, Hall of Fame—Harley Race.

Wrestling 94—Rulebreaker (Spring 1994): **Forget About Those Other Guys—Here Are The Real Year-End Awards.** (Spring 1994): 1993—The Year Of The Rulebreaker. Plus: Sting, Brian Lee, Hall of Fame—Killer Kowalski.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Winter 1994): **King Kong Bundy—Monster With A Mission.** Color Pinup: Bob Backlund. Plus: Tommy Dreamer, UFOs, Hulk Hogan, Abdullah the Butcher, Big Van Vader, Hall of Fame—Ivan Koloff.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Spring 1995): **Vader's Vow Of Violence: "I've Begun My Systematic Destruction Of Hulk Hogan!"** Color Action Gallery: Sabu. Plus: Kevin Sullivan, Bob Backlund, Ric Flair, Jim Cornette & The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Tatanka, fat wrestlers, Hall of Fame—George Steele.

Wrestling Bad Guys (Summer 1995): **WCW In Hogan's Control: The Inmate**



Is Running The Asylum! Color Action Gallery: Big Van Vader. Plus: WCW Uncensored, Bret Hart-Jerry Lawler, Bubba Rogers, the next Flair, Hall of Fame—Fritz Von Erich.

WRESTLING RULEBREAKER/BAD GUYS

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A **DQ** VIEW OF 2001:

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR WRESTLING'S BIGGEST STARS!

Two times, Chris Benoit has beaten The Rock for the WWF title. Of course, the conniving Mick Foley immediately overturned both of those decisions. No matter. We have a feeling 2001 is going to be "The Crippler's" best year.



NO MATTER HOW much you watch and study professional wrestling, you can never tell exactly what the future will hold. Who would have foreseen goody-two-shoes Booker T revert to his G.I. Bro gimmick, revert back to Booker T a few weeks later, win the WCW World title, lose it, regain it, lose it, and regain it a second time when Howard Stern "Whack Pack" member Beetlejuice crotched Jeff Jarrett during something called a 49ers match? And if you *did* foresee such a scenario, it might be a good idea to cut down on your NyQuil intake and see a specialist.

The year 2000 saw a number of talented wrestlers elevated to the next level. Triple-H became the official *DQ* poster boy for being the most dominant rulebreaking champion in WWF history, bypassing even the great "Superstar" Billy Graham. Kurt Angle proved that he was deserving of all the hype. Scott Steiner destroyed the myth of Bill Goldberg, while Jeff Jarrett got a running start in his quest to top Ric Flair's world title mark. Even Kane made a late run to return to the WWF title picture after a two-year absence.

But it was in ECW in which those of the rulebreaking ilk did the most damage. Justin Credible proved to be a tremendous World champion. And Rhino—what can we say about the guy who humiliated The Sandman repeatedly, nearly crippled Lori Fullington (Sandman's helpless wife), and pinned the overhyped Rob Van Dam at Anarchy Rulz? Yes, chalk 2000 up as a year for the dark side, with only The Rock and Booker T standing in the way of a virtual bad guy sweep.

What do the sport's top superstars have to look forward to in 2001? Will Sting *finally* make his run at another WCW World title, or will he crawl back to Vampiro and beg to join The Dark Carnival? And if he does, will Vampiro set fire to Sting once again? What about Triple-H? Is his New Year's Eve destined to be spent wondering whom Stephanie will be smooching at midnight? Can Justin Credible regain his belt and restore the aura of dominance he cultivated during his reign of terror atop ECW?

In the following section, we take a look at 15 of the top names in the sport and examine what they've done in the past year. We consider their career options and identify what each man must do if he hopes to succeed in the new year. Competitors like Steve Austin, Rhino, and Scott Steiner earned great forecasts. Others, like Booker T, Rob Van Dam, and The Rock, aren't likely to repeat past glories this year.

There are sure to be plenty of surprises in store for us over the next 12 months. Injuries and politics can take their toll on anyone. However, based on the evidence we've presented, it looks like 2001 is going to be a great year to be a rulebreaker. And that, friends, is true.



At Anarchy Rulz, Rhino proved to the world and Rob Van Dam that he is both the unstoppable force and the unmovable object all rolled into one. RVD was helpless against Rhino's merciless onslaught.

TRIPLE-H

Last year, Triple-H turned even the most jaded enthusiasts of the fine art of rulebreaking back into gushing fans. In an era in which even the so-called good guys were abusing referees, pounding beers, and flaunting their utter disregard for the rules, Triple-H managed to rise above the competition to become the most hated (and, not so coincidentally, the most successful) wrestler in the WWF.

When it comes to being bad, Triple-H really was that damn good.

In this business, success really boils down to focus. As the WWF World champion, Helmsley was focused on nothing more than keeping his belt. He

exposed Chris Jericho as the mid-card fraud he really is. He outlasted the Rock in a one-hour "Iron Man" match. He was even the first rulebreaker to ever walk out of WrestleMania with the World title. That *has* to count for something.

Now where is he? Getting bested by Kurt Angle in a silly soap opera revolving around his wife, Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley. Instead of gunning for the WWF title, Triple-H is trying to prove his manhood against our Olympic hero. Well, in our opinion, there is only one way to prove your manhood in the WWF—and that's by being the federation's World heavyweight champion. Pining away for a lost love might make for a good romance novel, but who gives a damn about that? And now Chris Benoit has started to antagonize Triple-H by working the Stephanie angle, too. Helmsley's become so overloaded with aggressors that he has even turned to The Rock for help on occasion! How is that possible?

Helmsley's only hope for getting back to the top of the mountain is to cut Steph loose—or at least keep her out of the arena. If he can do that, "The Game" might not be over. Right now, though, it certainly looks like it's on pause.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Has a future as the irascible (yet loving) Dr. Helmsley on the new prime time soap opera *Titans*

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: We have one word for you—Stephanie

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Keep Steph in the kitchen and worry about getting his belt back

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Vince McMahon. Steph's father can't be too pleased with watching his distraught daughter act a wreck over the state of her marriage

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Triple-H's destiny is in his own hands. If he wants to be "The Game," he should worry about the game and not domestic issues. If he wants to be a romantic lead, he should start hanging around Fabio

GOLDBERG

This is the year we find out what Goldberg is really all about. Vince Russo has forced him to match his famed winning streak just to keep his job in WCW, and we have a feeling he won't be wrestling Jerry Flynn in every other match for six months this time around.

It truly pains us to say this, but a healthy Goldberg is bad news for WCW's rulebreaking fraternity. For some reason, Goldberg has an unbreakable aura of invincibility. Scott Steiner and Mike Awesome (and possibly even Sgt. A-Wall) are much stronger, but no one else can *dominate* an opponent like Goldberg. Well, no one can dominate a weak opponent like Goldberg.

But this isn't 1990. The era of the high-intensity, low-stamina, Ultimate Warrior-inspired champion is over. As recently as three years ago, we might have predicted a stellar year for Goldberg, but today, the man in charge doesn't even want him in WCW.

Can "Da Man" go undefeated for another 176 matches? Fed a steady diet of Meng and Kronik, perhaps. But if Goldberg stumbles just once, he's through. With Goldberg out of the picture, everyone else in WCW moves up a step, so everyone in the promotion stands to gain if Goldberg fails. Bret Hart, Kevin Nash, and Hollywood Hogan have already shown that Goldberg can be swerved. Expect some double-crosses to short-circuit this streak and put another obstacle in his path.

Now, if Goldberg were smart (which, clearly, he isn't—not at all) he'd appeal Russo's edict with The Cat or another bigwig in the front office. Instead, foolish pride will be his fatal flaw, and Goldberg will spend the new year battling the system rather than reaping its rewards. We can't say he doesn't deserve it, either. His little "I don't want to be the bad guy" speech was one of the most pitiful things we've ever seen. Goldberg's rise to the top was meteoric, but his final fall from grace will leave a massive crater.

Goldberg's best years are behind him. Or should we say best year?



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Excellent whiner/complainer. Sometimes he complains so much that his superiors have no choice but to give in to him. Nice guy

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Can't win a battle of wits with, well, anyone really

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Prove himself all over again. Maybe Booker T will grant him a title match despite Russo's edict. Otherwise, he just has to win—a lot—or lose his job. At least it's a simple formula, one even he can understand

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Scott Steiner. Steiner crushed him at Fall Brawl. He'll do it again and again and again if necessary

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Absolutely horrible. Goldberg's tough, and the fans love him, but picking a fight with Russo was even stupider than trying to put his arm through that limo window. Goldberg's likely in for an atrocious year

THE ROCK

Whether we like it or not, The Rock figures to be near the top of the WWF for the foreseeable future. But that doesn't mean he's going to be the World champion, and it doesn't mean he's not going to suffer some big losses.

What will the new year hold for The Rock? Let's just throw a few names out there for you. Chris Benoit. Raven. Tazz. Kane. Chris Jericho (okay so he'll beat somebody). Steve Austin. Triple-H. Is that enough for you? The Rock is going to go up against a wide variety of opponents this year, and he's not going to be up to the task. Hollywood's buzzing over The Rock's upcoming *Scorpion King* movie, and shooting hasn't even begun yet. The Rock is in demand, and he's going to spread himself thin—he's too arrogant to think he'll have anything but a cakewalk in the ring. Sorry, but the man is believing his hype, and that usually leads to a quick downfall for a champion.

Who's next in line for the WWF title? At this point, it's

too close to call, but Benoit seems to have the inside track. If Triple-H could get his marital doldrums straightened out and revert to being the rulebreaking guy we grew to love so much, "The Game" would be the WWF's top man again in a minute.

As for The Rock, he's going to be severely tested this year. He certainly won't be on top by the time SummerSlam rolls around. He just makes too many enemies, and his hands are already too full. Despite all that playing to the crowd crap, we haven't forgotten Rock's performance at the 1999 Royal Rumble. Remember those 17 skull-crushing chair shots he delivered to Mankind's dome? If the Rock's going to win big in 2001, that's the kind of fire we're going to have to see.

How do we get Rock to rediscover that fire? Well, we have seen a few anti-Rock signs popping up at arenas around the country. We hear a few boos from those who are finally starting to figure out that The Rock keeps relying on the same old predictable lines and same old moves.

Remember the last backlash against The Rock?

When he debuted in the WWF, he was so clean-cut and happy-go-lucky that most people just couldn't stand him. They turned against him so he turned against them. We want that evil Rock back.

Don't count on it happening, though. That kind of stuff doesn't play in Tinseltown.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Can make the crowd repeat his catchphrases

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Can make the crowd repeat his catchphrases

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Continue to make the crowd repeat his catchphrases

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: George Lucas. With his burgeoning movie career ready to take off, The Rock needs to stay away from Lucas just in case the *Star Wars* director decides to cast him as the next Jar Jar Binks

OVERALL OUTLOOK: The Rock will remain the WWF's most popular man. He just won't keep the belt. It's up to him to decide what's more important

ROB VAN DAM

Of the 15 wrestlers *DQ* profiled for this section, RVD has the bleakest prospects for the new year. After sitting out a large portion of 2000 with an ankle injury, Van Dam showed he's taken one too many chair shots to the head by picking a fight with Rhino. Van Dam may call himself "The Whole Show," but it's obvious he doesn't have the grapefruits to be World champion.

Two years ago, Van Dam was at the top of his game and seemed to be the heir-apparent to Shane Douglas' crown. Instead, RVD got soft, kissing up to the fans and never demanding a single title shot. Van Dam's apologists claim RVD was ready to challenge Mike Awesome when tragedy struck and he snapped his ankle like a twig while executing a baseball slide.

But even those rabid Van Dam backers had to be embarrassed by their hero's complacency and lack of drive upon his return.

Instead of summoning the courage to challenge Justin Credible, RVD settled for the mid-card, where he can usually excel with relatively low stakes. While wallowing down there, however, Van Dam ran into Rhino, and ECW's greatest TV champion of all-time thoroughly embarrassed RVD by not only pinning the former "Mr. Monday Night" at Anarchy Rulz, but by countering the ballyhooed Van Terminator and sending Bill Alfonso to the locker room on a stretcher.

Van Dam has grown soft on a steady diet of undersized aerialists, and Rhino took him to school. Conventional wisdom says now that Jerry Lynn is the ECW World champ, Van Dam will finally take his shot at the big belt. Don't bet on it. Van Dam has suffered pay-per-view losses to both Lynn and Rhino in recent months. Those losses should take him right out of the title picture. Let's see if Van Dam can crawl back up the ladder and *earn* a shot.

The only way we can see RVD succeeding is if he returns to true rulebreaking form. We have to wonder if he even remembers how.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Self-promotion. If there's a wrestler alive who is better at hyping himself, please point him out to us.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: He's a little scaredy cat who is too frightened to challenge for the ECW World heavyweight title.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Find some guts.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Bill Alfonso. With the manager of champions spewing so much pro-RVD propaganda Van Dam's way, it's no wonder "Mr. Pay-Per-View" has such a big head.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Bleak. Bleak as hell.

STEVE AUSTIN

There are some who say Steve Austin should never have come back to the ring after his most recent surgery. After all, he spent the better part of a year on the sidelines nursing his injured neck. When he returned at Unforgiven, he didn't seem particularly anxious to do anything but hit a few indiscriminate Stone-Cold stunners and sloppily chug some beers. As the new year approaches, Austin is another year older. Triple-H, Chris Jericho, Chris Benoit, and a fellow by the name of The Rock have replaced "Stone-Cold" as the top guys in the WWF.

That's why we're predicting a banner year for Austin.

It seems clear to us that SCSA is once again ready to embrace the dark side. His quest to discover the driver of the car that ran him down at Survivor Series '99 saw him embarrass and attack the beloved Mick Foley, a man who, as commissioner of the WWF, was doing everything in his power to right the wrong. Heck, if it wasn't for Foley, Austin might have never learned it was Rikishi who ran him down in the first place.

The timing seems just about right for this scenario: By

the time the Royal Rumble rolls around, Austin, full of rage, will have probably faced Rikishi dozens of times. By then, his ring rust will have been worked off and he'll be at full strength. He'll be ready for a title shot just in time for WrestleMania, especially if The Rock is the man with the gold. And what if Triple-H has the title? You'd better believe Triple-H will *beg* for a WrestleMania matchup against Austin. There's strong animosity between these two stemming from the fact that Austin refused to wrestle Triple-H one-on-one at SummerSlam '99.

But the key to Austin's success might just be his mortal enemy. Vince McMahon stayed off WWF TV for too long this summer and fall. It seems the only thing that could make the fans truly hate Austin is if he teamed up with Vince and set out to destroy The Rock—and that's exactly what we see coming down the pike.

But that doesn't make any sense, you might argue. As much as Austin hates The Rock, at least he respects him, which is more than can be said of his feelings toward McMahon. Hey, Austin says it himself all the time: Don't trust anyone—and that includes "Stone-Cold." An alliance with McMahon would virtually guarantee another World title run.

Will it happen? No one can be too sure. But with "The Rattlesnake" looking to once again become the WWF's top man and McMahon looking to rid himself of an annoying little pebble known as The Rock, anything is possible.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Very aggressive. Nobody likes kicking tail more than "Stone-Cold" does.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Ring rust and myriad injuries leave him very susceptible in the ring.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Makes amends with Vince McMahon, his most dangerous enemy from the past.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Chris Benoit and Raven. Benoit earned his "Crippler" moniker by breaking Sabu's neck; one evenflow DDT from Raven could end Austin's career instantly.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Outstanding. In 2001, Austin comes home.

BOOKER T

Booker T's *only* hope for a successful 2001 would be a return to the G.I. Bro gimmick. Hey, at least G.I. Bro was entertaining. He made us laugh.

Booker benefited from Vince Russo's benevolence when Russo chose him to face Jeff Jarrett for the WCW World title at Bash at the Beach. Booker made a decent champion. He defended the title regularly and somehow beat the likes of Lance Storm, Sting, and Jeff Jarrett. But let's face it—Booker as a main-eventer is still an unknown commodity. He had his first title shot handed to him by the kind-hearted Vince Russo. Remember when Ron Simmons (Faarooq) won a lottery to face Vader for the WCW title and won the gold? Simmons had a solid run, but once his opponents were able to adequately scout him and prepare better game plans, he disappeared.

Booker is a more well-rounded champ than Simmons was, but he faces the same obstacles.

Another thing that made Booker look reasonably good was the absence of some of WCW's most recent champions. How would Booker fare against Dallas Page (the

conniving DDP, that is), Hollywood Hogan, and Ric Flair? How would he fare in a grueling series with a completely healthy Kevin Nash? Sting still thinks he deserves title shots (yeah right!), and all those Millionaires are still under contract to WCW, which means they could be back at any time. Will those marquee names boot Booker out of contention based on their presence alone?

Probably, but let's put all that aside for a moment. What about the more immediate threats of Scott Steiner, Jeff Jarrett, and Lance Storm? Storm vs. Booker would be a technical thriller (with Storm undoubtedly coming out on top in the end), and Jarrett is capable of winning the big belt at any time. But Steiner ... and even Goldberg? They'd make Booker head back to Harlem Heat in no time. Booker had the best year of his career in 2000. His luck is just about to run out.

Of course, when Booker's fall from grace finally occurs, he'll have nobody to blame but himself. By refusing to accept that Russo was more responsible for his success than anyone else, Booker put himself in a position that only the foolhardy savor—that of being a marked man.

Sure, Booker surprised us all last year by winning the WCW World title. But there's this thing about surprises—they're not so surprising the second time around.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Knows how to suck up to the right people (i.e. Vince Russo)

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Doesn't realize that unless he keeps sucking up to the right people (i.e. Vince Russo), his success will be fleeting

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001:

Find a way to convince people like Scott Steiner and Jeff Jarrett that they should be his allies. Booker could learn a lot from an association with such proud warriors

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Vince Russo. It looks like this relationship can't be repaired at this point, not even if Booker does some serious groveling

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Very good, provided he comes to his senses and returns to the tag team ranks. We think he could still do reasonably well in that division

KURT ANGLE

European champion. Intercontinental champion. King of the Ring. King Kurt had perhaps the greatest rookie year in WWF history. The question is, will he fall victim to the infamous sophomore slump?

Don't bet on it. Angle may play the comedy act from time to time, but he's hiding one of the most balanced offensive arsenals in the sport.

Think about it. Angle has competed in Greco-

Roman and freestyle wrestling matches all his life. We have to believe he could put some of those skills to use in the squared circle if he so chose. Picture this: Angle executes a single-leg takedown on The Rock. Rock falls to his back but clumsily rolls to his stomach as Angle seizes wrist control and locks his right arm around Rock's waist. Before Rock even knew what was happening, Angle could cinch up a leg-ride. From there, "The Brahma Bull" might as well submit and give the belt away.

Angle, however, is no dummy. He's been smart not to showcase too many of his amateur moves. Sure, he developed the Olympic slam and some suplexes, but he kept everything else hidden away. By so doing, he's kept other wrestlers from developing effective counters. Instead of using his knowledge of Greco-Roman wrestling as a crutch, he immersed himself in the pro style and has excelled. In fact, Angle has already beaten most pros at their own game, including getting the best of Triple-H—a psychological master—in a mind game centered around Stephanie.

Once Angle decides to stop playing the fool, he'll be unstoppable. His 2001 is already shaping up to be better than his impressive 2000.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: A gold medalist in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, his technical ability is unmatched

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Emotionally tied to Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Like Triple-H, Angle must dump Steph and concentrate on wrestling

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Kane. Angle and "The Big Red Machine" keep getting in each other's way. An important match is lost every time they bicker with each other

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Kurt Angle is already an Olympic hero; he'll make a fantastic WWF World champion

STING

You'd think that after all these miserable years, we'd finally be able to get a grasp on what Sting is really trying to accomplish. Up until 1996, the "Stinger" was a happy-go-lucky neon-clad pretty boy who pretty much made us sick to our stomach every time we saw him. But we held out hope for surfer boy Sting, mainly because he once studied under the evil master himself, Eddie Gilbert.

We choked back the urge to puke every time Sting "Owwwww-ed" the fans in a pathetic, pitiful cry for acceptance. When Sting became The Crow, it looked like the mean streak was finally rediscovered. Instead, we eventually got a red-faced Sting prancing around with his fingers over his head in the secret Wolfpac sign. Back to the barf bag for us.

Now we're hearing Sting is going to make another change soon, that he's going to reinvent himself yet again. *Whoop-dee-do*. Frankly, we're keeping our expectations very, very low. Since adopting the Crow-like face paint, Sting has wrestled infrequently and

been bogged down in meaningless feuds. Still, it's hard to give up that faint morsel of hope that Sting will finally come to his senses, forget about the fans for good, and focus on winning belts.

Indulge us in this little fantasy: Having gotten a fleeting taste of his own mortality during his, *uh*, fiery feud with Vampiro, Sting realizes the landscape of the wrestling world has changed around him. Suddenly he figures out he is no longer relevant, that he is becoming a graying dinosaur. He's a sideshow attraction, not "Every Man's Nightmare." Sting trains with The Great Muta (whom he rescued at Fall Brawl) and combines the angst-ridden, high-impact Crow with the trash-talking, arrogant Sting of old. Sting could go back to the sneak-attacks—only this time he'd be attacking fan darlings like Booker T, Mike Awesome, and those Filthy Animals. Just imagine a truly dangerous Sting.

That's just a dream. In reality, we expect Sting to go about doing what he's done through most of the late-1990s (save for that brief but soon forgotten turn a year ago). He'll get some main events based on his name alone, he'll wrestle when he wants to, and he'll be the most popular non-factor in the promotion. What a waste.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: He takes a lot of time off, so we don't have to watch him week after week.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: We could go on all day here, but let's just remind everyone of how gullible he is. Has anyone kept track of how many times his "friends" have duped him in the last 10 years?

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: It's time for Sting to check himself. Update the image. Hey, the NWO has moved on. It's time for Sting to do so, too. Actually, it was time at least five years ago.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Lex Luger and Ric Flair. Been there, done that. Again, time to move on.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Not good at all. Sting is always on the verge of reclaiming his spot as the top man in WCW. Never seems to do it, though.

CHRIS BENOIT

Too small. Too bland. Too technical. Those have always been the lines on Chris Benoit. In 2000, Benoit proved all the critics wrong. He overcame a 10-inch, 70-pound size disadvantage to beat Sid Vicious to win the WCW World title—that is, before WCW contested the decision and declared the title vacant. On two separate pay-per-views, Benoit was announced as the new WWF champion—that is, before both matches were restarted and a surprised Benoit was pinned.

On one hand, "The Crippler" had a career year. On the other hand, it was a year of frustration and false hope. The difference between the Benoit of January 1, 2000, and the Benoit of January 1, 2001, is a world of bitterness. And a new confidence.

That's a lethal combination.

Benoit has proven he can compete against and

beat the top wrestlers in any federation, yet he is without a title belt. Not only that, but Benoit can rarely get a one-on-one confrontation with The Rock; the title picture is just too crowded. Benoit is on the verge of losing his contender slot to Rikishi, Kane, or even Chris Jericho. He has a wonderful opportunity to compete for the WWF title right now. If he fails, he might not get another shot anytime soon, especially with people like Tazz and Raven on the fringe of title contention.

The good news is that he's already added a psychological element to his attack by playing mind games with Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley. "The Crippler" has shown real flashes of evil in the past, but the smirk he gave Stephanie after she slapped the taste out of his mouth in a hallway on *Raw*—that was right out of the playbook of his old nemesis Kevin Sullivan.

Benoit will have an excellent chance for huge success in 2001 if he simply keeps doing what he does best, which is beat people like Triple-H convincingly. He's too damn good to be held down for long.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: He's an absolute master of the technical aspect of the sport. He also likes to hurt people. No, he *loves* to hurt people. And we love that about him.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: He's just too good. Because people like Mick Foley and perhaps others in the hierarchy of the WWF don't think he's the most marketable superstar in the world, he doesn't get treated fairly.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: If he can beat Triple-H convincingly, perhaps several times, the long-awaited one-on-one *fair* title match will have to come.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Anyone except Triple-H and The Rock. By instigating a feud with anyone else, he could unwittingly jeopardize his position in the ratings.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Extremely bright. Benoit is going to prove that you don't have to be 6'4" or have a bunch of great catchphrases to be a WWF World champion.

JUSTIN CREDIBLE

Sometimes the man makes the championship, and other times the championship makes the man. In Justin Credible's case, the latter is clearly true. When Credible beat Tommy Dreamer for the ECW World title, it was widely considered an upset. People were saying it would only be a matter of weeks before someone, be it Sandman, Raven, or Yoshihiro Tajiri, took the belt from him. Well, Credible has proven his credibility as a champ. He's thoroughly embarrassed The Sandman, Raven has flown away, and Tajiri has fallen under The Sinister Minister's spell.

Shortly before deadline, New Jack and Jerry Lynn managed to rob Credible of his belt, but we're not

concerned. Remember how upset Credible was when Shane Douglas announced he was naming an ECW "Franchise" successor and bypassed The Impact Players in favor of Dreamer? That was the day Credible became true championship material. Ever since then, he's been on a quest to prove himself to everyone who continues to underestimate him. In a way, the Aldo Montoya thing was probably the best thing to ever happen to him. Justin Credible has spent three years inflicting pain and generating mayhem because of that Aldo-sized chip on his shoulder.

Don't get us wrong. We have a soft spot in our hearts for Jerry Lynn. For a fan favorite, that boy has a dark side that's just waiting to be explored. But does anyone remember Rick Steamboat? Steamboat was an incredible contender, a clean-cut phenomenon with a similar untapped evil streak. But once Steamboat managed to win a title, he would invariably lose it in short order. Credible has developed that championship mentality that we don't see in Lynn. Credible would cane Francine if he thought it would get him his belt back (he's already done it once). In fact, losing the belt might help him over the long haul. Now, however, Credible must go back to being a challenger. It shouldn't take him too long to regain his belt and hold it for most of 2001 as ECW's franchise player.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: He truly fears *no one* in ECW.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Sometimes spends too much time jawing with the obnoxious fans at ringside.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Regain his belt and learn not to underestimate any opponent.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Some would say Rob Van Dam. Instead, we think Credible should prepare a special game plan for Van Dam and call him out. Van Dam is likely to be his only real challenge.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Do we really have to come out and say it?

KANE

Kane is finally making full use of his extraordinary physical skills. When he debuted in the WWF, "The Big Red Machine" showed that he had the potential to steamroll just about everyone in his path.

Too bad Kane's days (make that *day*) at the top was fleeting. Kane had been on a downward spiral ever since he parted company with Paul Bearer. Sure, he won over some fans when he started hanging with Tori. X-Pac was even able to carry him to a pair of WWF tag titles. But the kinder, gentler Kane was a poor substitute for the hellfire-and-brimstone monster we'd come to cherish. Call us sadistic (you'd better believe we've been called worse), but we pine for the days when Kane kept his mouth shut and spiked everyone in his path with the tombstone. Or how about when he disinterred his parents and set their

remains (and his brother, The Undertaker) on fire? Absolutely classic! Spooky and disturbing, but classic nonetheless.

Shortly after The Undertaker returned to the WWF in May, the Kane of old returned. Only this time, he's become a veritable chatterbox, and he's finally making his own decisions. On the surface, it might seem like luring Rikishi into a feud was a waste of time. The truth is, it was a cunning maneuver, one that shows that Kane has more going on upstairs than anybody gave him credit for. See, the WWF title picture is awfully crowded right now. Rikishi wants his title shot, but he's going to have deal with an awfully irate Steve Austin.

Kane struck at just the right time. Rikishi was looking past him and awaiting his title shot. Now that Rikishi has Austin to deal with (go Rikishi!), Kane steps right into a top-contender's spot. Expect Kane to use that momentum to propel him right to a series of title shots.

Jim Ross keeps hinting that there's more to Kane's sudden verbosity than anyone realizes. Is someone guiding the monster's career from afar? Is Paul Bearer lurking somewhere in the shadows? What about Raven? Kane is surrounded by mystery. For once, it seems as if he knows more than everyone else.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Power, ruthlessness. Isn't that enough?

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: He can be a little slow and methodical for our liking, but that's a very minor criticism. Hey, we had to come up with something!

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Build on that aura of invincibility and perhaps use someone like Rikishi as the world's biggest steppingstone.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: The Undertaker. Big brother had a way of getting the best of him in the past. Not that we'd ever expect him to do so again, but Kane doesn't need this type of distraction.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Hot (pun fully intended)—as in bright. Kane looks more relaxed in the ring than he has ever looked before. He also looks more dangerous than ever before.

SCOTT STEINER

"Big Poppa Pump" is what any self-respecting bad guy aspires to be. It's hard to believe this foul-mouthed juggernaut wasted so many years hitting those beautiful, breathtaking Frankensteiners when he could have been snapping spines in the Steiner recliner. Steiner has been a professional wrestler for 14 years now, and he's managed to successfully transform himself from a suplex-happy aerialist into a menacing, sneering, profanity-spewing, power-based brawler. The late Dino Bravo tried the same formula, but Bravo's new-found mass took away from his mobility and actually made him less effective in the ring. Steiner's metamorphosis has carried him to a much higher level and has delivered him into the sport's upper echelon.



It's hard to envision 2001 without Scott Steiner holding the WCW World title for at least some length of time. But the World title isn't what Steiner needs to truly prove his greatness. We think he's already done that. Steiner decisively beat the heretofore "unbeatable" Goldberg at Fall Brawl in a match that featured just a little interference by Vince Russo. Steiner doesn't need any help from anyone—he's good enough to win on his own.

When Steiner finally eliminates Goldberg, he will have a stranglehold on the entire promotion. You see, "Big Poppa" is just too much man for anyone else, except Midajah apparently. One great thing about Steiner (there are so many) is that he hasn't forgotten the skills that made the Steiners one of the best tag teams ever. He can still use the tilt-a-whirl and still knows dozens of suplex variations. And God help his opponent if he ever hits another Frankenstein. Those thigh muscles could rip a man's head clear off his shoulders!

Steiner always seems to be one step away from completely losing control and unleashing the full force of his fury on anyone around him. If we could make one suggestion, Mr. Steiner: Loosen up! We'd love to see Mount St. Steiner erupt all over fan-pandering pretenders like Sting and Booker T. Holler if ya hear us!

BIGGEST STRENGTH: Isn't this obvious? Inhuman strength. He combines it nicely with everything he learned as a collegiate star at the University of Michigan.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Bill Goldberg showed Midajah can be a liability. She's susceptible to sneak-attacks, although her lead pipe is a good first defense.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Run Goldberg out of WCW. After that, WCW is his oyster.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Rick Steiner. Can't let big brother get jealous and lure him into meaningless matches.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Extremely bright. Steiner will do whatever he wants to do, and there's nobody (including Vince Russo and Goldberg) who can stop him.

THE UNDERTAKER

He says he's some sort of American bad ass, but perhaps "The Myopic Dumb Ass" would be a better moniker. We loved the "Heeeeeee's here" promo with the little girls and the Kid Rock entrance music, but changing the wrapping paper doesn't change the gift. The years have taken their toll on 'Taker. A groin injury and several other maladies put him on the shelf for several months, and in early-fall, another groin problem (Or is it an elbow injury? We just can't keep things straight with this guy!) had him on ice yet again. He may look like a member of D.O.A., but the Y2'Taker is—in that sage Steven Tyler's words—"a new version of the old scene."



That being said, we're not quite ready to count "The Dead Man" completely out. While the whole Ministry of Darkness was a bit weird for our liking, The Undertaker did emerge as one of wrestling's all-time great baddies in his war against Steve Austin in 1999. Who could forget his attempt to marry Stephanie in a dark ceremony, or the night he hung Austin up on his symbol and made him look like a fool?

Now that's great *DQ* material!

When 'Taker came home, we were hoping for another descent into the maelstrom. Instead we got Undertaker lite, and Kane has distinguished himself as the legitimate bad ass in the family. When Undertaker reappeared during the "Iron Man" match at Judgment Day, he foolishly cost The Rock the WWF title. Maybe he thought Triple-H would give him more shots. It would have only taken one for The Undertaker of old to beat The Rock.

Undertaker has always functioned best with Paul Bearer at ringside. Today, Undertaker is using a slower and more methodical attack, which means he *desperately* needs someone watching his back. Bearer could also rein in 'Taker's bad ass persona and get him back on the title track.

BIGGEST STRENGTH: Has to be the old intimidation factor. He's still able to spook lesser opponents. He needs this tactic to work for him more than ever, for he's easily outclassed once the bell rings

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: His aching bones. And tendons. And muscles. And ligaments. And joints

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Make peace with Paul Bearer. Maybe make peace with Kane and admit Kane is by far the better man. Better yet, find a new manager. Trish Stratus could be just what he needs to put some spark in his step

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Steve Austin. Old feuds tend to die hard

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Sinister. As in bad. Undertaker's not nearly as tough as he thinks he is anymore. If he re-forms The Ministry of Darkness, though, his outlook will improve dramatically

JEFF JARRETT

"The Chosen One" had a heck of a 2000, don't you think? After 14 years in the sport, Jarrett won his first world title at Spring Stampede. That was followed by his second world title win and his third world title ... heck, for a while there, it looked like Jarrett was going to surpass Flair's record for world title wins by the end of the calendar year (and since there were a few months left in 2000 at press time, we suppose that technically, he still has a chance to do so).

It would take a few breaks for Jarrett to again reach the level of success he did last year. With Goldberg healthy, Booker T occasionally dominating (like that's going to happen *again* in 2001), Scott Steiner hungry for his first WCW World title, and Kevin Nash and Sting

always floating around, Jarrett has a very steep uphill climb ahead of him. Here's a secret: Jarrett's more than ready for the challenge.

In fact, Jarrett's more than ready for *any* challenge.

As long as Vince Russo holds a top spot in WCW, Jarrett is a pen stroke away from a title shot. But even without Vinnie Roo's stroke, Jarrett has the talent to remain in the title picture on his own. WCW's relaxed rules have virtually made the Jarrett guitar shot an accepted finisher. Combined with his technical mastery and his unquenchable thirst for winning championship gold, Jarrett has positioned himself as WCW's true top player. He's angered just about everyone in WCW at some point or another (that's a good thing), and getting matches against the top contenders in the promotion isn't a problem. Though the fans hate him, Jarrett even has some crossover appeal (the variations of "Slappy" have sparked a cottage industry in T-shirt and foam guitar sales.)

Jarrett is young enough and devious enough to continue to build on his success well into the new millennium. With respect to the great Shane Douglas, the guitar-swinging man from Tennessee is WCW's real "Franchise." Expect more great things in 2001.



BIGGEST STRENGTH: Always hungry, and he's equally adept at brawling and technical wrestling

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Often relies on using his guitar when he could just as easily win on his own merits. Is that really a weakness, though?

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: Stick with Russo, at least until the political winds shift

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Well, he oughta stay on "Big Poppa Pump's" good side. And he has nothing to gain by beating a washed up Sting over and over again

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Outstanding. Matching Flair's record for world titles by the end of 2001? We'd settle for one long reign in the next year

RHINO

Remember all those people who said Rhino was making a mistake by picking a fight with The Sandman? Neither do we. Rhino has done more to damage Sandman's health than all those cigarettes and Budweisers combined. From a rulebreaking perspective, Rhino is the hottest prospect in the game today. It was his muscle that gave the original Network credibility. He has had his hands full with Rob Van Dam, but he scored the biggest win of his career by pinning RVD at Anarchy Rulz. For all the hype of the Van Terminator, leave it to a basics-first kind of guy like Rhino to figure out the counter: pulling Bill Alfonso into the corner to take the brunt of the impact. Brilliant!



Rhino has been an exceptional TV champion and remains one of the most underrated grapplers in the business. What's incredible is that he's only in his early-20s. He should have a tremendous future.

But not this year.

It hurts us to say this, but what comes up must come down. Rhino had a stunning year in ECW. He proved his unmitigated brutality when he piledrived Lori Fullington off the ring apron and through a table on the floor. But Rhino's not taking anyone by surprise anymore. Without Corino and Victory, Rhino no longer has a cavalry. Plus, Van Dam is fixated on that TV title, and Rhino can count on facing off against RVD dozens of times before this feud is over. Rhino will most likely lose the TV title sometime this year, be it to Van Dam or someone else.

How will he cope with that kind of a loss? Is Rhino mentally prepared to compete on his own? With only six years of experience, can he realistically challenge for a world title, or does he need more seasoning? There are a lot of unanswered questions right now, and we're not so sure Rhino has considered any of them. The coming year is likely to be a make-or-break year.

We can't wait to see how he deals with the adversity.

BIGGEST STRENGTH: Barrel-chested power and deceptive quickness make him a formidable foe.

BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Much too headstrong for his own good.

WHAT HE MUST DO TO SUCCEED IN 2001: After a great 2000, will Rhino be able to deal with the unavoidable pitfalls? He must fend off Rob Van Dam and continue to run over (as well as gore) everyone in his path.

WHOM HE MUST AVOID: Tommy Dreamer. Even at well under 100 percent, Dreamer is dangerous. Now is not the time for this matchup.

OVERALL OUTLOOK: Bright. It will be a year full of challenges. Will he be able to overcome all of them?



The Hardys'

STAND THERE AND FIGHT FOR ONCE!

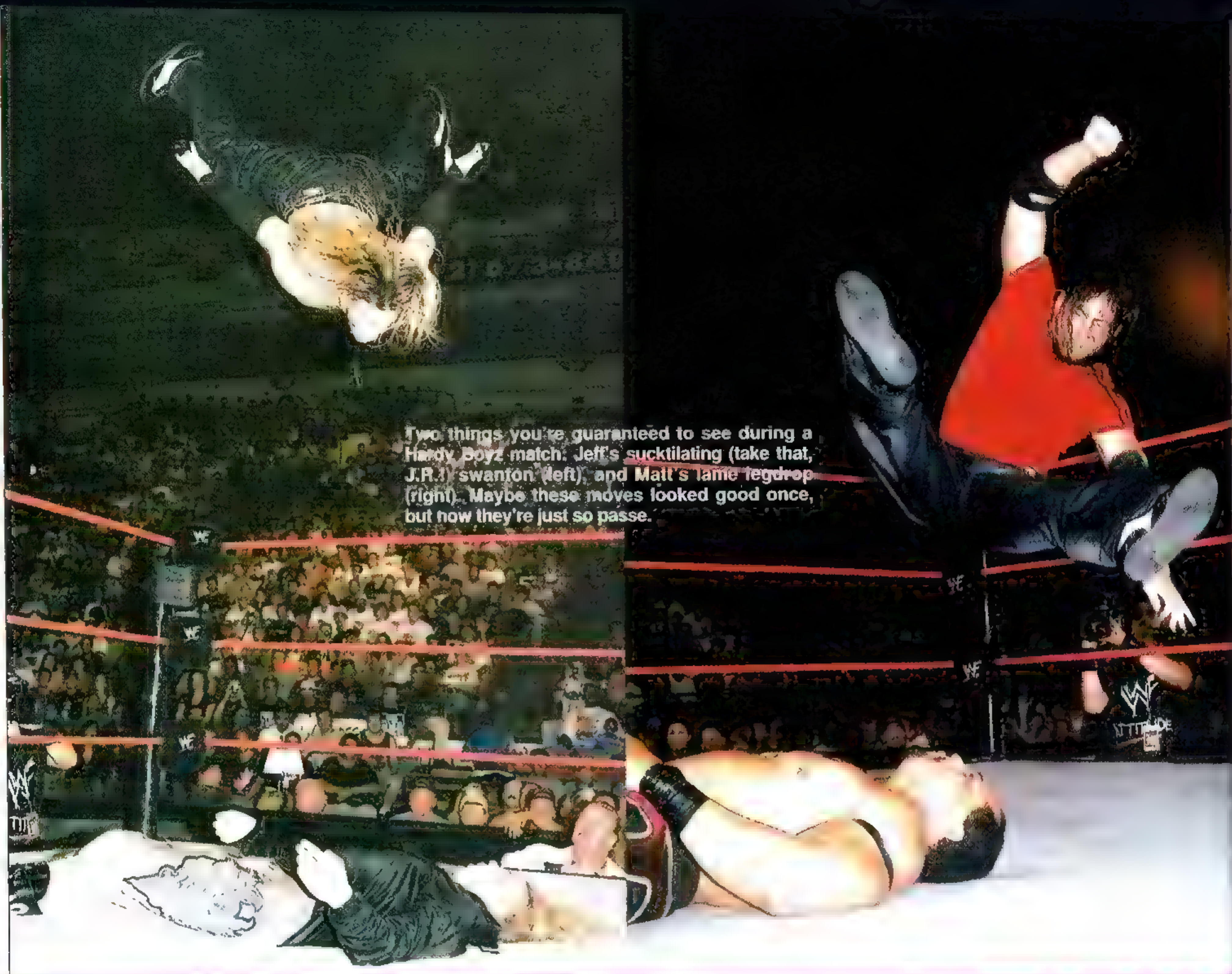
Cowardice Gives Them Their Wings

In a sport predicated on hand-to-hand combat, Matt and Jeff Hardy have managed to become stars by avoiding contact. But how good would they be if they had to stay on the mat and wrestle? Not very!

EVER WONDER HOW Deion Sanders stays fresh enough to promenade around the end zone after running back an interception or punt? It's simple. He plays practically the whole game without ever touching an opposing player.

He shies away from tackles and skirts blockers at all costs. Sure, he ends up on *SportsCenter* every week, but when you get past the sizzle, "Prime Time" isn't cooking the thickest steak on the grill.

Well, look out, Vince McMahon-Tagliabue, the WWF has its own answer to Deion Sanders—two answers, actually—Matt and Jeff Hardy. Sure, their matches are the stuff of highlight reels, all sentons, swantons, and pescados. But how well would these weak tag team darlings fare if they had to roll up their sleeves and slug it out? Hard to say, but one thing's certain: We'll never find out. In fact, we have a better chance of seeing "Neon" stuff a fourth-and-one fullback dive.



Two things you're guaranteed to see during a Hardy Boyz match: Jeff's sucktilating (take that, J.R.) swanton (left), and Matt's lame legdrop (right). Maybe these moves looked good once, but now they're just so passe.

For wrestling fans, *real* wrestling fans, the only thing more frustrating than watching Matt and Jeff's Tinkerbell antics is hearing how the throngs of teenyboppers cheer for them. And the way they've swallowed the "daredevil" tag that folks like Jim Ross toss around so freely, well, it's enough to gag a maggot.

"Nobody takes more risks consistently in the ring than young Matt and Jeff Hardy," J.R. says. "They put it on the line every time."

Yeah, right. We're guessing "the line" is found at the top of a ladder or on the ringpost, where courageous grapplers like Kurt Angle and Chris Benoit can't get their hands on them. That's where the Hardys feel safe. That's where they find their strength. It may be a smart strategy for getting ahead in today's game, but there's nothing risky about it. On the contrary, it's flat-out cowardice. If the Hardys were real risk-takers, they'd be grinding out wins on the mat, where real champions cut their teeth.

"When you wrestle the Hardys, you spend a lot of time standing around," complained a very astute X-Pac, "because they're climbing a ladder or scaling the ropes. For once, I wish they'd show some guts and fight like men."

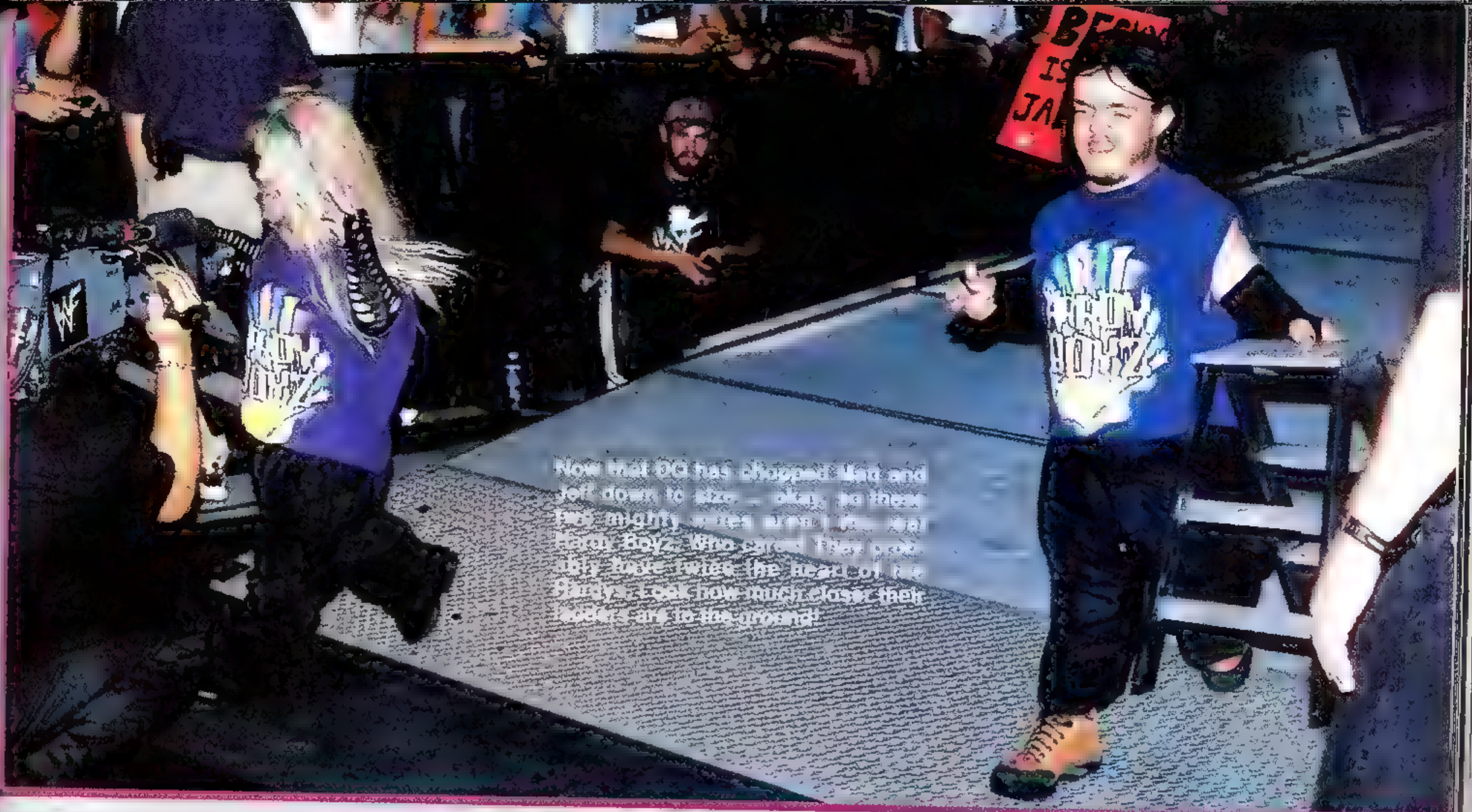
Apparently, fighting like men hasn't been a successful strategy for the WWF World tag team champs. After all, whenever Edge and Christian or Test and Albert get Matt and Jeff on the canvas, Lita—a chick—has to run in to save the day. And having the ladies champ bail you out three or four times per week can't be a confidence booster.

"That's another thing," X-Pac continued. "They're supposed to be these real brave psycho-dudes, but if you look at it, you spend more time fighting off that skank than actually wrestling them. Totally frustrating, man."

Want more proof that your tag team champs lack testicular fortitude? Try to remember the last time the Hardys wrestled in a high-profile match that didn't include special stipulations that favored their aerial attack. It seems that every pay-per-view match involving them also involves ladders or a 15-foot steel cage.

"So incredibly bogus," Christian agreed. "All those high spots are great for selling the pay-per-view replays, but let's face it, it's like totally unfair to us. I mean, it reeks of total sucktitude. And I'll tell you something else. Those moves looks totally gnarly, but they're not as bitchin' as they seem."

Case in point: Jeff's swanton from the steel cage on



Now that DQ has dropped Matt and Jeff down to size — okay, so these two mighty ones aren't the real Hardy Boys. Who cares? They probably have twice the heart of the Hardy's. Look how much closer their bodies are to the ground!

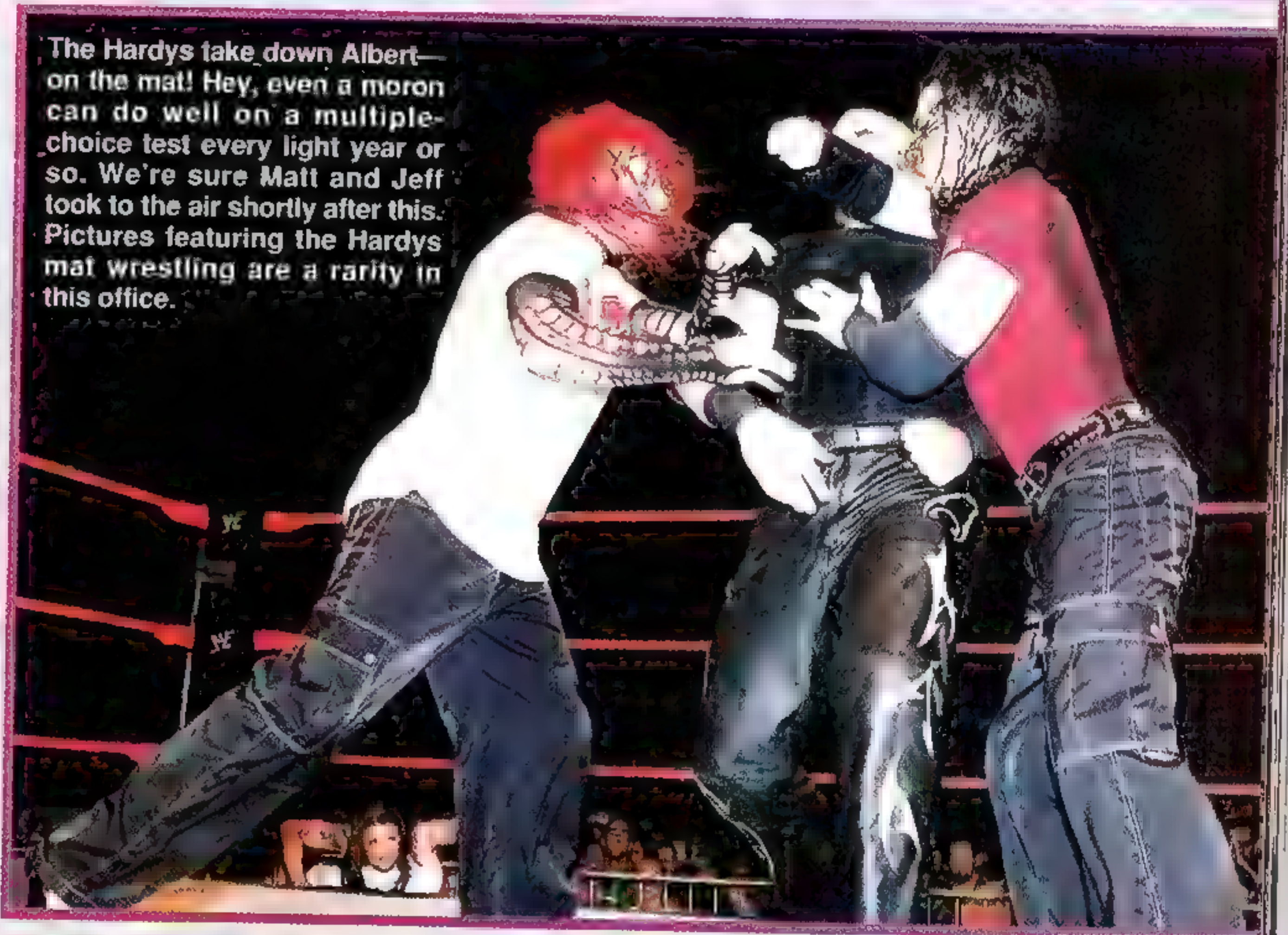
Edge and Christian at Unforgiven clearly missed the mark, but the former champs laid on the mat anyway. Why?

"We were like totally furious," Christian admitted. "First of all, Mick Foley screwed us when he made it a cage match, and we knew it. Then we had to spend the entire match chasing them around a cage. Up and down, on a ladder, off a ladder. Finally, we said, 'This sucks. We're outta here.'"

Any competitive athlete can appreciate Christian and Edge's angst. But rest assured, sooner or later some team will exercise a little more determination than the former champs. The Hardys' prepubescent fan club may buy into the multi-colored hair and the stupid and pointless hand gestures, but the rest of the WWF roster has Matt and Jeff figured out. Guys know what they have to do. But actually getting the champs to engage in a wrestling match is a totally different matter.

"The only way to do that is to get them one at a time," said X-Pac. "They like their ladders, but they like double-teaming you, too. Or triple-teaming you if Lita's out there. I know I can take either one of them in the air or on the mat—and that's a fact. But when they team up, you can't get your hands on them. They just run and jump and flip around. It's amazing what punks they are. They'll do anything not to lock up. Anything! Even 15-foot moon-

The Hardys take down Albert—on the mat! Hey, even a moron can do well on a multiple-choice test every light year or so. We're sure Matt and Jeff took to the air shortly after this. Pictures featuring the Hardys mat wrestling are a rarity in this office.



saults. I really, really hate wrestling the Hardys."

What X-Pac really wants to say is that he hates wrestling the Hardys because it's hard to look good when your opponents are too scared to lock up. Just like a pulling guard hates trying to block Sanders in the open field, it's hard to hit what you can't catch.

Still, we don't blame X-Pac or any other real wrestler in the WWF for hating the Hardys. We hate watching them.

In fact, we'd rather watch Deion do one of his silly dances in the end zone.

Injuries Be Damned!

"The Franchise" has made plenty of enemies over the years, but that hasn't stopped him from forging a great career in the ring. Neither has a bruised and battered body

SHANE DOUGLAS
WON'T
LET HIS
BODY
BEAT HIM!



Long after Shane Douglas was supposed to have retired from the sport, he's keeping busy in WCW by kicking the tails of guys like Mike Awesome. Injuries? What injuries?

“YOU SCREWED UP! You screwed up!” That’s pretty much what Shane Douglas should be saying to Paul Heyman right now. Why? Because if “The Franchise” was still wrestling in ECW, chances are, the federation would be in a hell of a lot better shape than it is now.

But in January 1999, Heyman took stock of his roster and decided that the four-time former ECW heavyweight champ was too decrepit, too worn, too injury-prone to be of any more use to the company. So he let the greatest wrestler in ECW history sail away in a sea of dispute and ill will.

It’s hard to really blame Heyman, though.



After all, the ECW owner watched his most prolific champion battle injury after career-threatening injury. There was the busted elbow, the chipped ankle bone, the lower back strain, the blown out knee, and the collapsed sinuses. Oh, those damn sinuses! And that's not to mention the broken fingers, nose, cracked palate, and countless concussions. To put it kindly, Douglas had more mileage on him than your average '74 Pinto.

Again, at the time, not many people really faulted ECW for letting Douglas go.

The big problem with Shane was that he looked to most like an aging wrestler whose body was breaking down. His body seemed to have a difficult time backing up his words the way it used to.

Well, if Shane's resurgence in WCW is any indication, Douglas looks to be as capable as ever of backing up his tough talk—injuries be damned.

"I've always said that if I can't live up to the level 'The Franchise' set for himself, then I'd bow out gracefully," Douglas said. "But I feel healthier than I have in a long time and I'm looking pretty damn good, too. Sure, the injuries have piled up, but they haven't slowed

me down one bit. You can ask Torrie about that. I'll go out when I decide; I'll be damned if I let my own body beat me."

Indeed, Shane's performances haven't waned one iota from his best days in ECW. In fact, Douglas' matches in WCW have been every bit as demanding as they were in ECW. He's been through scores of table matches with men like Sgt. A-Wall and Mike Awesome, and he's matched wrestlers like Billy Kidman and Konnan hold-for-hold.

Amazingly, there are still some fans—and even

Apparently, injuries haven't kept Douglas down in other ways, either. Torrie Wilson loves her "Franchise," and "The Franchise" sure does love his Torrie. Don't they make a handsome couple?



Hey, we like Justin Credible. He made a great ECW World champion. But let's face it, "The Franchise" is ECW's greatest champion ever. When he says he put ECW on his back and carried it to greatness, he's telling the truth.



wrestlers—who regard Douglas as the broken down has-been ECW took him for. Of course, that has only benefited Douglas, as he's schooled anyone dumb enough to make that mistake.

"The biggest mistake any wrestler can make is selling me short in the ring," Douglas eloquently and succinctly explained. "If they know anything about Shane Douglas, they know that injuries will never stop me from 'Franchising' their ass!"

The same holds for true for the fans. Then again, Douglas was never known to curry favor with the feeble-minded critics or slack-jawed opponents who detest him because he speaks his mind no matter whom he offends.

So his valiant comeback goes unnoticed by those who've branded him as a malcontent. As lousy as it sounds, Shane will probably be remembered more for his big mouth than his unwavering dedication to the sport. It's one of the greatest injustices ever perpetrated in wrestling history.

Compare, for example, Shane's great career with Mick Foley's. Fans continue to celebrate Foley's toughness long after his retirement. Meanwhile, Douglas guts out win after win, despite absorbing twice as much punishment as Foley has. But "The Franchise" never hears, "Way to go!" or "That's incredible!" Instead, he hears boos from those programmed to cheer for the Goldbergs and Stings of the world.

Of course, it doesn't help that Douglas was able to steal one of the hottest women in the sport—Torie Wilson—off the arm of fan favorite punk Billy Kidman.

"Oh yeah! Sweet Torrie. My pride and joy," Shane beamed. "I stepped right in and took over, didn't I? Not bad for an old cripple!"

According to Wilson, choosing between Kidman and Douglas was easy. "Let's see, you have Kidman, and you have 'The Franchise.' Who would you rather be with? Believe me, Shane is in a lot better shape than people give him credit for. That's why I just laugh at the people who wrote him off. They really don't have any idea what they're talking about."

Ain't that the truth, Torrie. And knowing "The Franchise," you had better believe he's loving every second he proves the naysayers wrong. You can tell by that big, bright smile that every match Douglas wins is a resounding "Ha! I just 'Franchised' your ass!" directed at all those hovering over him, waiting to pronounce his career dead.

But that day is a long time off. A few years ago, when



When Mike Awesome arrived in WCW, he was supposed to run through the promotion and every wrestler in it. Of course, Awesome wasn't expecting to run smack dab into "The Franchise's" grasp.

Douglas was contemplating retirement, he said he hoped fans would remember him as someone who did the best he could to make wrestling better.

These days, Shane doesn't even contemplate the end.

"Those were different times," Shane said. "I was stuck at a dead end of sorts. But now I'm back in great shape. I have a beautiful babe by my side. And I'm kicking ass. Why should I even think about the end?"

Really, why should he?



Injuries never kept Douglas from getting in the ring, so he expects everyone else (including Jason) to wrestle injured, too. Douglas doesn't care how hurt you are—if you're supposed to wrestle him, you're *not* going to punk out.

Does This Story Have Credibility?

DAM RIGHT IT DOES

One of these days, the darling of ECW—Rob Van Dam—will have to face Justin Credible. It's not a day Van Dam is looking forward to—and we've figured out why



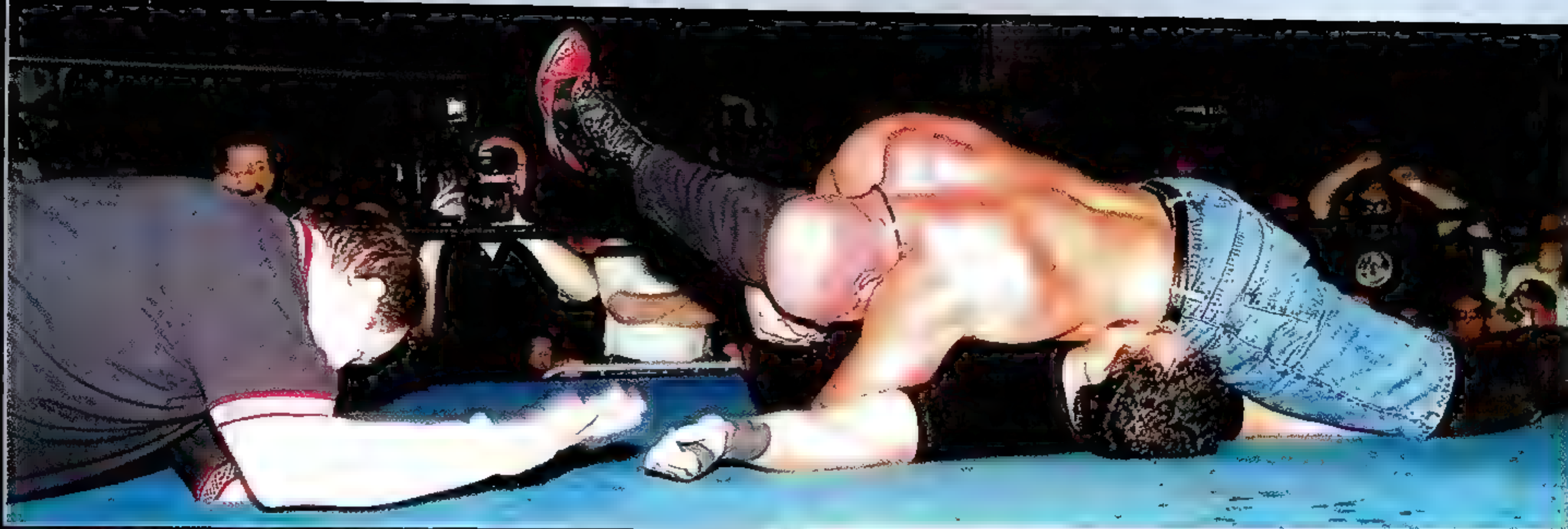


FOR MONTHS, ECW fans have been force-fed a steady diet of lies. Joey Styles, Joel Gertner, Bill Alfonso, and yes, even Rob Van Dam himself, have concocted one of the most misguided, dishonest smear campaigns ever put into motion.

The accused: Justin Credible. The accusation: Credible is ducking RVD. The horror: ECW fans have accepted this nonsense as the truth.

Now for the reality: It's all a bunch of malarkey. A simple evaluation of the facts will show that not only does Credible have nothing to fear, but that it's really Van Dam who dreads the inevitable showdown more than anyone.

Of course, the best place to settle this debate is in the ring, but the staff here at *DQ* realizes it will be a long time before Van Dam musters the guts to wrestle the former (for now) ECW World champion. So we compared the two in six key categories to see who would win, and our conclusion is irrefutable: Van Dam has no chance of defeating Credible. Here's why:



Justin Credible proved just how much he wants "it" at CyberSlam 2000. Only minutes after Tommy Dreamer had defeated Tazz for the ECW World title, Credible charged the ring and won the belt from Dreamer. Has RVD ever shown such desire?



So what if Van Dam can kick a chair into a guy's face? Big deal. Now, if he would stay on the mat and show some chain wrestling expertise, he might prove something to us.



Now this ... this was one of Credible's finest hours. With Lance Storm holding RVD back (Storm didn't want Van Dam to injure himself by swinging at Credible), Justin showed "Mr. Pay-View" who really is incredible.

WRESTLING SKILLS

When was the last time Van Dam executed a mat-based maneuver? We certainly can't remember. Sure, monkey flips and splits are nice to watch, but they're not very effective when it comes to wearing an opponent down.

Credible, on the other hand, can deliver an excellent DDT or Ace crusher at just about any point of a match. And his "That's Incredible" piledriver has become the benchmark by which all finishers are judged.

Advantage: Credible.

AERIAL ABILITY

Of course, RVD fans point to the five-star frog splash, the Van Daminator, and the Van terminator and proclaim their hero the undisputed king of high-flying wrestling. But wrestling matches aren't won and lost by virtue of which man pulls off the most visually stunning maneuvers. This isn't gymnastics. Don't misunderstand us, though. We're sure Van Dam would do well in the balance beam competition. The high bar, too.

Credible, by contrast, makes more efficient use of the ring post and ropes with his swinging DDT. No high-risk, energy-sapping pescados or moonsaults here. Just a prudent, well-balanced attack.

Advantage: Credible.

BRAWLING ABILITY

RVD's punches are laughable. His standing side-kick, however, is a fearsome weapon ... against someone less adroit than Credible. But barring some unforeseen tragedy that somehow robs Credible of his ability to duck a well-telegraphed kick, there's no doubt that Justin's God-given speed and wrestling sense will be enough to negate RVD's paltry brawling skills.

Besides, Justin can dish out the punishment much better than Van Dam can take it. Think Jerry Lynn and Rhino whipped on Van Dam? Wait until Credible mounts his attack. Our prediction: Van Dam will bleed heavily—and early.

Advantage: Credible.

RING GENERALSHIP

No question, Van Dam likes to dictate the pace of the match with his nonstop posing and preening. Sometimes it takes more than 15 minutes for Van Dam's bouts to begin. Why? Because RVD loves pandering to his fans. It's not uncommon for Van Dam to stop the match by scaling the ring post and pumping his thumbs at himself.

But Credible can work a crowd just as effectively as Van Dam. How will RVD respond when all eyes are on Credible and Francine and not on him? And when it comes to establishing the pace of a match, ask Tommy Dreamer if Justin knows how to set it! Credible steam-rolled Dreamer at CyberSlam 2000 and walked away with the World title eight minutes later.

Advantage: Credible.

HARDCORE FACTOR

Get this straight, ECW fans, swan dives and free-falling do not make for hardcore wrestling. Sure, Van Dam will use a chair every now and then—as long as Fonzie can help him. But Fonzie can be equalized with little effort. And let's face it, the Van Daminator and Van terminator are among the most easily countered maneuvers going.

Justin regularly employs chairs, tables, and Singapore canes. Another area in which Credible trumps RVD: killer instinct. No wrestler is more creative when it comes to targeting an opponent's weaknesses. Expect lots of chair shots to Van Dam's gimpy left leg.

Advantage: Credible.

EXPERIENCE

True, RVD put together that 23-month title reign. But that was with a second-tier title—the TV belt. And Van Dam has come up short in big matches. He lost to Lynn in his first match back after injuring his leg. Then he failed to recapture the TV title at Hardcore Heaven when he was embarrassed by Rhino. Even before sustaining his injury, Van Dam couldn't even get by Sabu. Plus, there's no telling what Mike Awesome would have done to him had they locked up.

Now look at Credible's resume. As an ECW neophyte, he upset international veterans Gran Naniwa and Gran Hamada. He broke Mikey Whipwreck's leg. He chased so-called hardcore icons The Sandman, Shane Douglas and Sabu from the federation. Then he exposed Dreamer as the fraud he is at CyberSlam in a squash.

Advantage: Credible.

THE FINAL TALLY

These are just six categories in which Credible blows Van Dam away. We haven't even discussed Credible's superior toughness and intensity, or the help he could get from Francine. So we'll invoke our equivalent of softball's mercy rule and end the massacre here.

Why embarrass Van Dam further? After all, Credible will do that in the ring, if and when RVD ever agrees to show up.



Look how winded Van Dam is after throwing a measly chop in Jerry Lynn's direction. If RVD can't keep up with Lynn, how is he ever going to sustain any offense against Credible? Just another chink in RVD's armor.



We had a lot of fun watching Credible tear apart Kid Kash earlier this year. It's going to be even more fun watching Credible destroy Kash's mentor, Van Dam. Of course, the match might never happen. RVD might be too scared.

CHRIS BENOIT

Don't get us wrong, we like Kurt Angle. He's *DQ*'s favorite Olympic competitor ever. But to be honest, Benoit's been even more impressive of late. Right now, "The Crippler" should be a two-time WWF champion.




THE UNCROWNED



CHAMPION

Twice, Chris Benoit has won the WWF title from The Rock. Twice, he's done it fair and square. And twice, WWF Commissioner Mick Foley has wrongfully taken the belt away from "The Crippler." That's why the real WWF champ isn't The Rock ... it's Benoit



THERE'S WHINING ABOUT your lot in life. That's what Bill Goldberg does in a story that appears elsewhere in this issue. Goldberg is one of the richest and most successful men in the sport, yet he continues to blame others for his problems. He should either keep his problems to himself or do something about them.

And then there's having a legitimate gripe about an illegitimate royal screwing. That's the situation "Crippler" Chris Benoit found himself in as we went to press.

Back in July at Fully Loaded, Benoit faced WWF World champion The Rock. The stipulation of the match was that if The Rock got disqualified, Benoit would win the title. And that's exactly what happened when referee Earl Hebner ruled that The Rock had blasted him with a chair. We know it was actually Shane McMahon who clobbered Hebner—but an official's ruling is supposed to be final. And it wasn't like Benoit had broken the rules; he didn't hit Hebner.

For a fleeting second, The Rock was the *official* loser (we've considered him a loser for years) and Benoit was the WWF champion.

But then WWF Commissioner Mick Foley stuck his nose where it didn't belong. He ruled that there had been no reason to disqualify The Rock. The match was restarted. Stunned by this turn of events, Benoit lost the match.

A similar situation occurred in the fatal four-way match between The Rock, Kane, The Undertaker, and Benoit at Unforgiven in September. This time, the stipulation was that the first wrestler to score a pinfall or submission would walk away with the World title, even if The Rock wasn't pinned or didn't submit.

Fair enough.

Early on, Benoit clobbered The Under-



After dumping Eddie Guerrero and the rest of The Radicals (left), Benoit quickly found himself in a partnership with WWF heir Shane McMahon (above). Trading Guerrero, Perry Saturn, and Dean Malenko for a McMahon was a smart move.



taker with a steel chair and pinned him. Benoit was ecstatic. For a second time, he was announced as the new WWF champion and handed the belt.

But Foley struck again. This time he ruled that Undertaker's foot was on the bottom rope when Benoit made the pin. The match continued and The Rock won.

Very early in his WWF career, Benoit learned a dirty lesson about the federation: What Mick Foley giveth, Mick Foley can taketh away. And, rightfully so, Benoit complained about these injustices. He demanded payback. He demanded more matches against The Rock. Foley granted Benoit a match at the first *Raw* on TNN, but Triple-H's interference saved The Rock from certain defeat.

Our question: Why didn't Mick Foley enforce the rules that time, too?

These two incidents are the reason Chris Benoit is DQ's uncrowned WWF World champion.

"It's a joke," Benoit eloquently told us. "They come up with these rules. First, they say The Rock can lose the title if he gets disqualified. Hey, I didn't ask for that rule. In fact, I specifically said that I didn't want to win the title by disqualification, that I was going to make The Rock submit to the Crippler crossface. Then again, I would've been a fool to turn down the belt

when it was handed to me. Nobody's going to do that.

"Then, the second time, they said I didn't have to pin The Rock; all I had to do was pin one of the other two, and that's exactly what I did. But then Foley comes out and announces that The Undertaker had his foot under the ropes when I made the pin. Who the hell made him the referee?"

Good question. After all, the WWF rulebook doesn't have any specific provisions for video review. And the commissioner of the WWF had already assigned a referee to those matches: Earl Hebner. Hebner, not Foley, was supposed to be the unbiased arbiter of everything that went on in the ring during those two matches. Foley, who was watching from a distance, had no right to overrule Hebner.

Fact: If Foley thought two referees were necessary for those matches, he should have assigned two referees.

"That's what I'm saying," Benoit said. "Besides, Foley isn't there for every match, right? So does that mean the rules are different when Foley's there and when he's not there? I mean, with all the crap that goes on in WWF matches these days, Foley manages to pick and choose which infractions he thinks are the worst. What's that all about? People hit each other with chairs all the time, and there's interference all the time, so how am I supposed to know what's right and what's wrong?"

"But I'll tell you this: I don't need interference. I don't need tables and chairs. I don't need anybody's help. I'm the greatest technical wrestler in the world today. If The Rock wants to meet me on a traditional wrestling mat, no ropes, just us in the painted circle, I'm all for it. Let's see who really is the greatest wrestler in the WWF. I think he knows the answer to that."

We do, too. Of course, a traditional Greco-Roman wrestling match is not going to happen in the WWF. We were, however, interested in Mick Foley's take on this matter. Where in the WWF rulebook, we asked, is the commissioner given authority to overturn a referee's decision?

"It's in there," Foley told us.

"Where?" we asked.

"I can't give you a specific rule number,

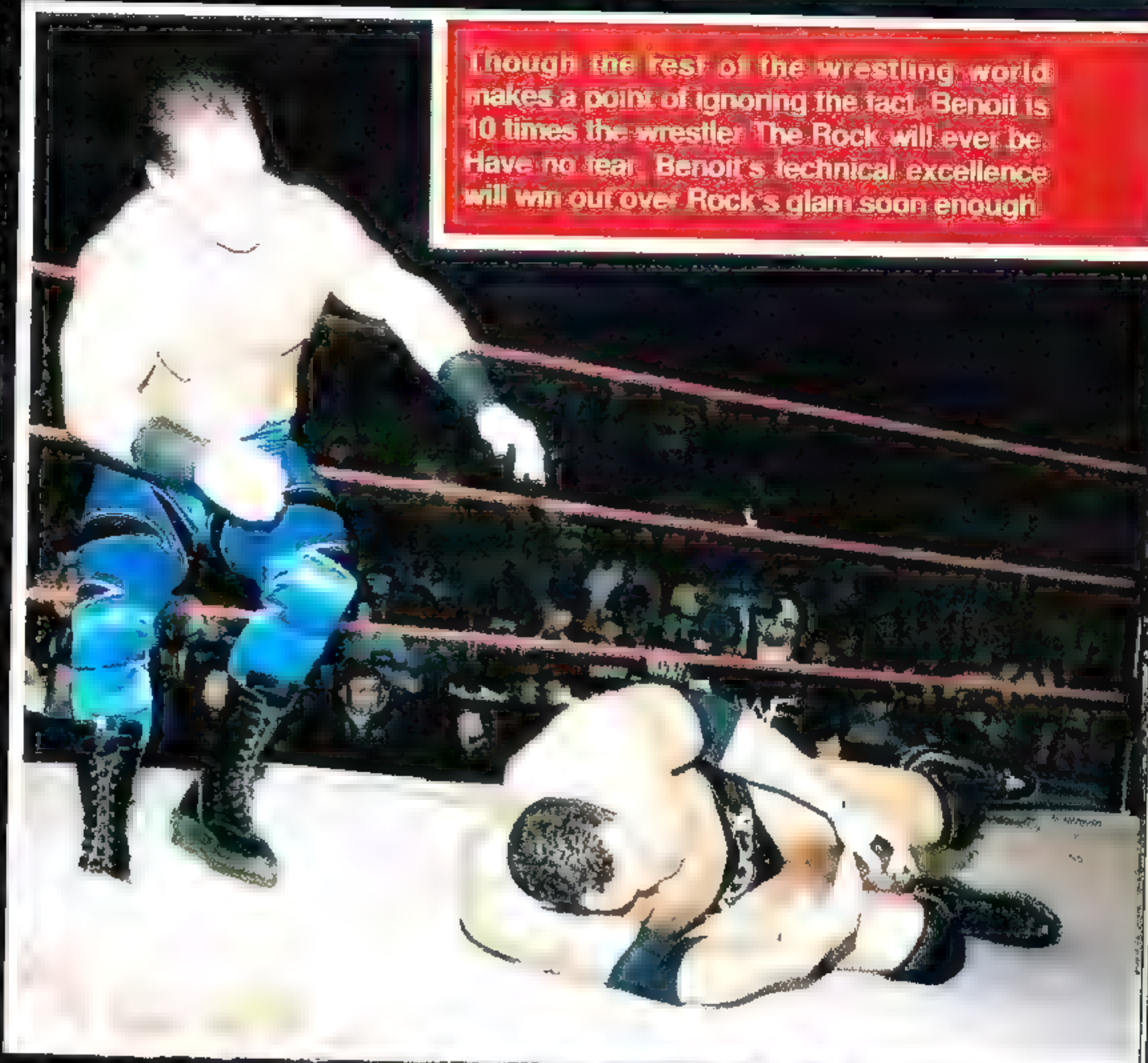
but it's in there, and my decisions are final!"

"How is it possible," we asked Foley, "that one of the baddest bad guys in wrestling history—meaning you—is able to make these kinds of decisions?"

"I never broke the rules," Foley said, smirking. "I just extended them."

Uh, okay. Well, Chris Benoit didn't break any rules, either. He merely took advantage of the rule extensions that were approved by Mick Foley himself.

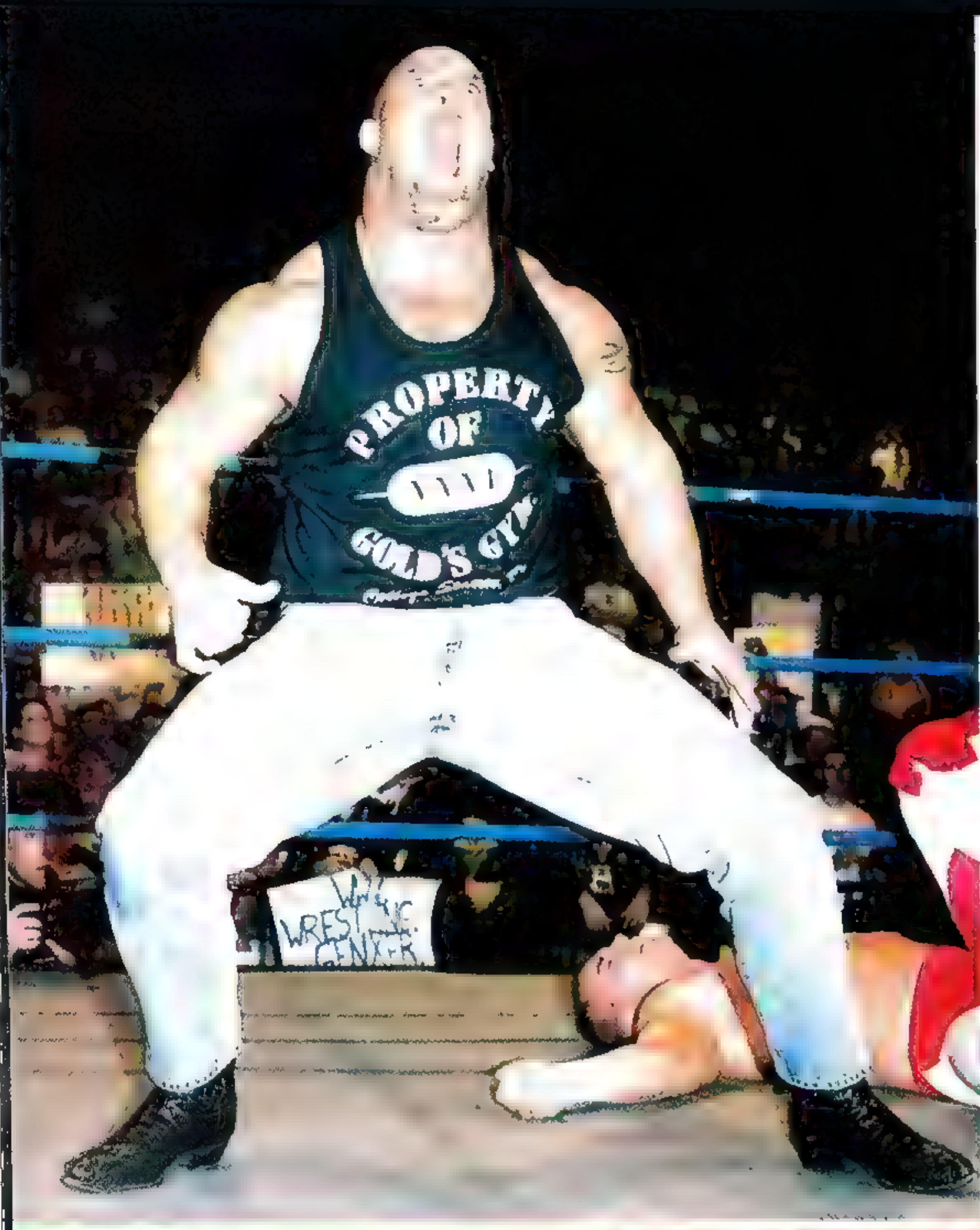
But give Benoit credit. He had a right to complain. He didn't. He just said, "Give me another chance." One of these days, Mick Foley won't be able to stop him.



Though the rest of the wrestling world makes a point of ignoring the fact, Benoit is 10 times the wrestler The Rock will ever be. Have no fear, Benoit's technical excellence will win out over Rock's glam soon enough.



Even The Undertaker, one of our former favorites, hasn't been able to withstand The Wolverine's rabid assault. Commissioner Foley will only be able to hold Benoit down for so long.



Our Dinner FINE SPEAR

Could a dinner with Bill Goldberg go any other way than with "Da Man" complaining, whining, moaning, whimpering, sulking, and then spearing our reporter through the table? Thank goodness—for our reporter's sake—that this didn't really happen.

But if it did **page**



With Goldberg WHINE & RIBS

What do you do when Goldberg's whining gets to be too much for you to take? Do like Scott Steiner (right). When "Big Poppa Pump" is through with him, he gets the message (below).



IF WE'RE GOING to do this right, then we're going to eat at a place we like. It has to be in Atlanta and has to be expensive, because we know Bill Goldberg is too "busy" to have dinner with us anywhere else, and we know that guys who don't like to pick up the check like to complain when you take them to cheap places.

Fortunately, we have the perfect place: the Buckhead Diner, just outside the downtown area. Goldberg—this dunderhead, this muscle-head jock who wouldn't know class if it slapped him in the face—is going to be livid. He's going to think we're taking him to a run-of-the-mill open-faced turkey sandwich diner. We can see it now.

"Meet us at the Buckhead Diner on Piedmont



road." I'd tell him, referring to myself and *DQ's* photographer. "Make it 8 p.m."

"You got a reservation?" he'd bark at us.

"They don't take reservations."

"What kind of a dump are you taking me ..."
Click. I've had enough of that phone call.

Now it's 7:45 on the night we're supposed to meet, but Goldberg is still milling around the lobby of his downtown Atlanta hotel. He's

waiting for the limousine he thinks we sent. Of course he thinks we sent a limo to pick him up. He's a star. A superstar of the highest order in WCW. He'd expect a limo. But at 8 o'clock, dinner time, the limo still hasn't arrived. He checks his watch every 30 seconds. No limo. At 8:15, he walks up to the concierge and asks him to call him a cab. About 15 minutes later, Goldberg slides into the back of a cab that looks like it was last used in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Another 15 minutes later, the cab

pulls up at the Buckhead Diner. Goldberg doesn't tip the driver.

"You're late," I say as Goldberg walks in.

"Your limo never came," he says.

"We didn't send a limo." Goldberg's face turns red. He realizes we're not falling for his big star act. No limo ... the diner ... a place with no reservations. Fortunately, there's no wait on a Tuesday night.

"Excuse me, sir," I say to the maitre d', remembering what Goldberg did to Vince Russo, "but do you have any booths? I mean glass booths. My friend here is a little rambunctious."

The maitre d' looks up and sees who I'm with. He seems to faintly recognize Goldberg.

"Ah," he says. "Very funny." Then he leads us to a corner booth. We sit down. Goldberg opens the menu. I can see he's surprised. This is no ordinary diner. Char-grilled salmon steak, roasted gold potatoes, rosemary cream sauce, and pencil asparagus—for \$14.95. Crusted mussels, dill shallot mayonnaise, and eggless Caesar salad for \$12.95. I can see he's looking for the hamburgers.

"They're on the back page," I say.

"What?"

"The burgers."

"I'm not looking for the burgers ..." He calls me a name that has to do with a portion of my butt. Already, I can see he's in a bad mood. Time to strike. Our photographer, who ate at the hotel, orders peach bread pudding. Goldberg orders an iced tea, no sugar. "It has to be just right," he says.

I roll my eyes as I order a glass of the house red.

"I guess it must be nice to get away from WCW for a night," I start.

"Whaddya mean by that?"

"You know, seeing how dissatisfied you are with everything that's going on there. I was going to invite my friend Vinnie Mac ..."

"Don't talk to me about that crap. I'm not dissatisfied. I just want to be treated fairly."

"Fairly? What the heck is fair? This is wrestling, remember? I mean, you're the guy who had a little arm injury and stayed out for eight months."

"Five."

"Five ... whatever."

"And that was no little arm injury, mister." *Uh-oh.* He's calling me mister. "I had surgery on the tendons in my arm."

"Sounds to me like a typing injury."

"A what?" Goldberg's already getting angry.

It's really all this guy can do! Whenever he has a problem, he uses his fists to try to make things better. If he would *think* for a moment and realize that Vince Russo has some good ideas for him, he'd be much better off.



Guess Goldberg is happy now. The mindless masses out there are all cheering as he tries to set up Lance Storm for one of his pathetic jackhammers.



answer this!

KURT ANGLE

1

DQ: What's the major difference between amateur wrestling and professional wrestling?

KURT ANGLE: The most important difference is the fact that I, yours truly, happen to be in professional wrestling now, and amateur wrestling is having to muddle through without me. But that's okay.



"But if there were an Olympic event for idiots, Triple-H would be a gold medalist. Spousal-abusing, loudmouth shady characters are the worst kind of idiots. Oh, yeah. It's true."

Although I'm not there, I can still serve as an inspiration to millions of amateur wrestlers throughout the world. The WWF is different. I embrace the opportunity to travel throughout this country and around the globe, espousing the values that made me an Olympic hero. It's a daunting challenge because, as you know, most WWF fans aren't very bright. That simply means I have to work a little harder. Should I be praised for this? I think so.

2

DQ: Who's the biggest idiot in the WWF?

KA: I don't want to disparage anyone, but Chris Jericho is definitely an idiot. So is The Undertaker. And, just between you and me, I talked to Kane for about five minutes once. He isn't that bright, either. Steve Austin's a prime candidate. He's a beer-swilling, foul-mouthed idiot. But if there were an Olympic event for idiots, Triple-H would be a gold medalist. Spousal-abusing, loudmouth shady characters are the worst kind of idiots. Oh, yeah. It's true.

3

DQ: Your three "I's" are integrity, intensity, and intelligence. If you had to pick three wrestlers who personify each of those traits, who would they be?

KA: For integrity, I'd have to

go with Vince McMahon, the chairman of the WWF. He had the citrus fruit to stand up to Steve Austin a couple of years ago, even when Austin was making huge amounts of money for the WWF—no thanks to fans who don't know any better. Just look at his offspring. Shane and especially Stephanie are loaded with integrity. *Hmmmmmm*. Intensity? Without a doubt, that is Chris Benoit. He's been royally screwed out of the WWF title on two occasions, and that is a crime. Intelligence? That would be my good friend Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley. She displayed poor judgment in marrying a spousal-abusing, loudmouth cretin like Triple-H, but other than that, she has a very sharp mind.

4

DQ: What's been your lowest point in the WWF?

KA: That took place at Unforgiven. I was about to pin Triple-H when my good friend Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley—under duress I might add—hit me in my genitals. Frankly, that didn't feel very good. But I forgive Stephanie for that. She is my friend. Forgiveness is a vital part of friendship.

5

DQ: And your greatest moment in the WWF?

KA: The amazing part is that I've been in the WWF for only a year and I've already enjoyed so many glorious moments. It might have been



"Stephanie, like most people, is looking for a hero. She had disagreements with her dad, almost got married to that gigolo Test, and was desperate to believe in someone. It's too bad she married that scruffy-faced complainer, Triple-H."

when I won the Intercontinental title, or when I served as a role model throughout the world as the Eurocontinental champion. It could have been when I defeated the best the WWF had to offer in the 2000 King of the Ring tournament. Who can choose?

6

DQ: Do you have anything positive to say about Triple-H?

KA: I'm going to positively kick his ass. Feel free to delete that profanity and use another word there. Put it in brackets if you want. By the way, your colleagues were positively wrong to make him number one in the "PWI 500." And that is positively true.

7

DQ: Why do you and Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley have so much chemistry?

KA: Stephanie, like most people, is looking for a hero. She had disagreements with her dad, almost got married to that gigolo Test, and was desperate to believe in someone. It's too bad she married that scruffy-faced complainer, Triple-H. He's a bad influence. I think she fell for me when I gave her a hug. I didn't ask for anything—just a return hug. You know, return hugs are mandatory in France.

8

DQ: What has disappointed you most about the WWF?

KA: I don't like all the bickering. I tried to make friends, and my offers for friendship have been spurned. I gave Steve Austin an honorary Olympic medal because I thought he needed a pick-me-up. What did he do? He insulted me and attacked me. That honorary medal was very special. I don't even think the President gets one of those. It may not be as big or as valuable as my actual gold medal, and it may not make you a winner, but it means a lot to me.

9

DQ: Do you sympathize with Right To Censor?

KA: There are a few things, and a few people, that need to be censored in the WWF. Someone should push the censor button whenever Steve Austin or Triple-H open their mouths. What about The Rock? Some WWF champion! What is a candy ass, anyway?

10

DQ: If you could envision the perfect snapshot of your future in the

WWF, what would it be?

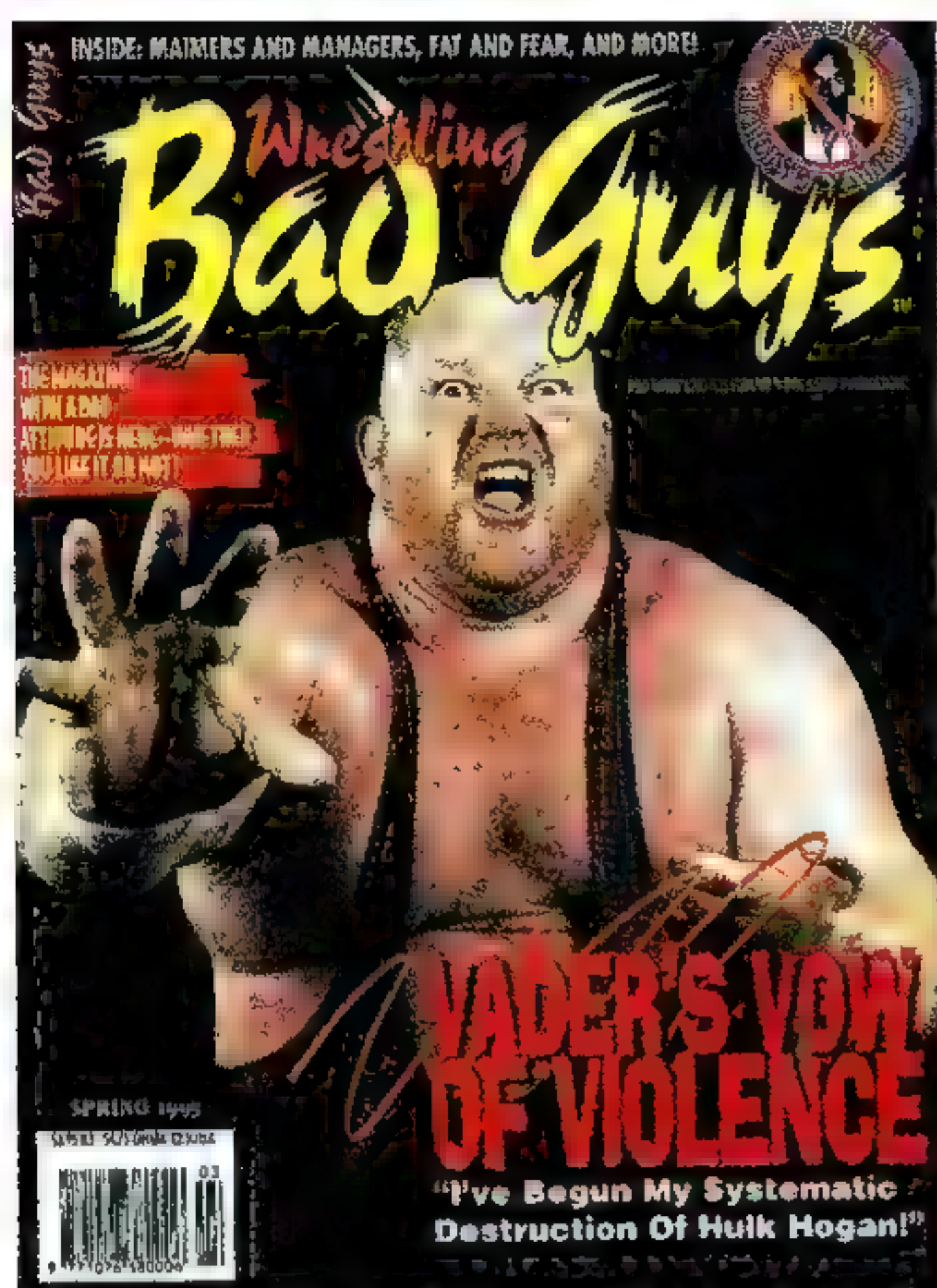
KA: How about me wearing the WWF title belt around my waist, sitting at Christmas dinner with the McMahon family? And the only thing brighter than my championship belt and my gold medal would be the gold wedding ring on Stephanie's finger. That would be the perfect snapshot.



"There are a few things, and a few people, that need to be censored in the WWF. Someone should push the censor button whenever Steve Austin or Triple-H open their mouths. What about The Rock? Some WWF champion!"

the truth

(Continued from page 10)



put the golden boys on the cover. But we all know the real reason people bought *Wrestle America*: to get a bimonthly dose of truth from its "evil" sister.

That's why I was suspicious when Stu Saks wanted to discuss the future of *Wrestling Bad Guys*. Since London was upgrading all of its magazines with more pages, more color, and more pinups, Saks wanted to revamp *Bad Guys*, too. He said "a new name and more departments" would be in order. But I knew there was a catch.

The new mag would be published only three times per year. Ah-hah! That was the catch!

As the process moved along, however, I felt better. We thought of a spiffy name: *DQ*. It shows us for the rebels we are, minus the "bad" connotations. The layouts from the production department were fantastic and, as we close out the magazine now, I'm very proud of our project.

Saks came up with a good one. But that won't make me any less suspicious when he wants to "suggest" new ideas for *DQ*. For the time being,

I won't complain. After reading our finished product, I'm sure you won't, either.

With the premiere issue of *DQ*, we've brought back some columns from the past. The one you're reading now, "The Truth," is like so many other things I've inherited from Eddie Ellner—an honor and a privilege. To Saks' horror, I've brought back something else associated with Ellner: his cousin Freddie. Readers of our older magazines will remember Freddie as a hip, cool, interactive young man of the '90s. Freddie remains devoted to the dark side of wrestling. His column, "Rulebreaker's Insider," is required reading.

Last and certainly least is "The (So-Called) Voice of Reason." It was another concession I made to Saks. Even when the fan favorite magazines outnumber us at least five to one, he still demands balance. That's fine with me. His self-serving and archaic views only validate our own.

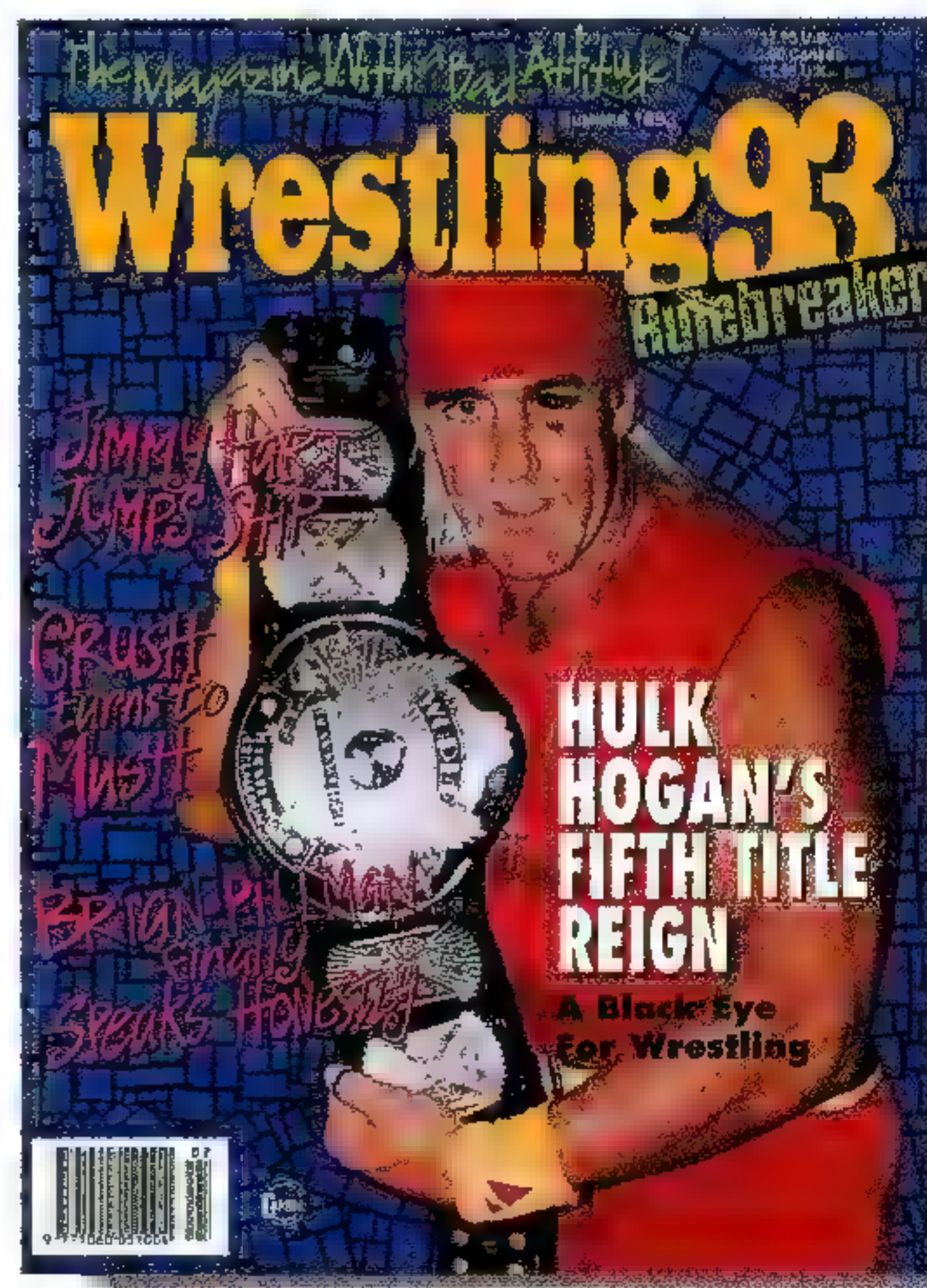
While flipping through the proofs and admiring all the color pinups for this issue, I can't help but think of how far we've come. There was a time when Dan Shocket was the only source of true intellectual thought in this business, and for many years, he was relegated to his two-page "Body-slams & Pinfalls" column in *Inside Wrestling*. Twenty years since his first groundbreaking column, you have *DQ* in your hands.

I continue to draw inspiration from the letters sent by my rulebreaking brethren. True, I have to sift through a lot of crap and drivel from fans mindlessly defending their golden boys. Over the years, it's been

Tommy Rich, Rick Steamboat, Hulk Hogan, Yawn Michaels, Bill Goldberg, and other puppets devoid of any principles. We've defended men and women with strong inner character, such as Ric Flair, Greg Valentine, Ivan Koloff, Sherri Martel, Kurt Angle, and other heroes too numerous to mention.

But the letters that truly inspire are ones from readers saying how rule-breaking has changed their everyday lives. There's nothing more satisfying than receiving a letter from a grown adult who's in the midst of a heel turn. Undermining co-workers, frustrating supervisors, and taking shortcuts to get work done before deadline all demands a great deal of initiative and creativity. I know, because I do it here at London Publishing. You're screwing the other guy before he screws you over. The difference is that you have the guts to do it first.

I hope you've learned something about the heel philosophy and put it to use in your life. Let *DQ* be your self-help clinic.



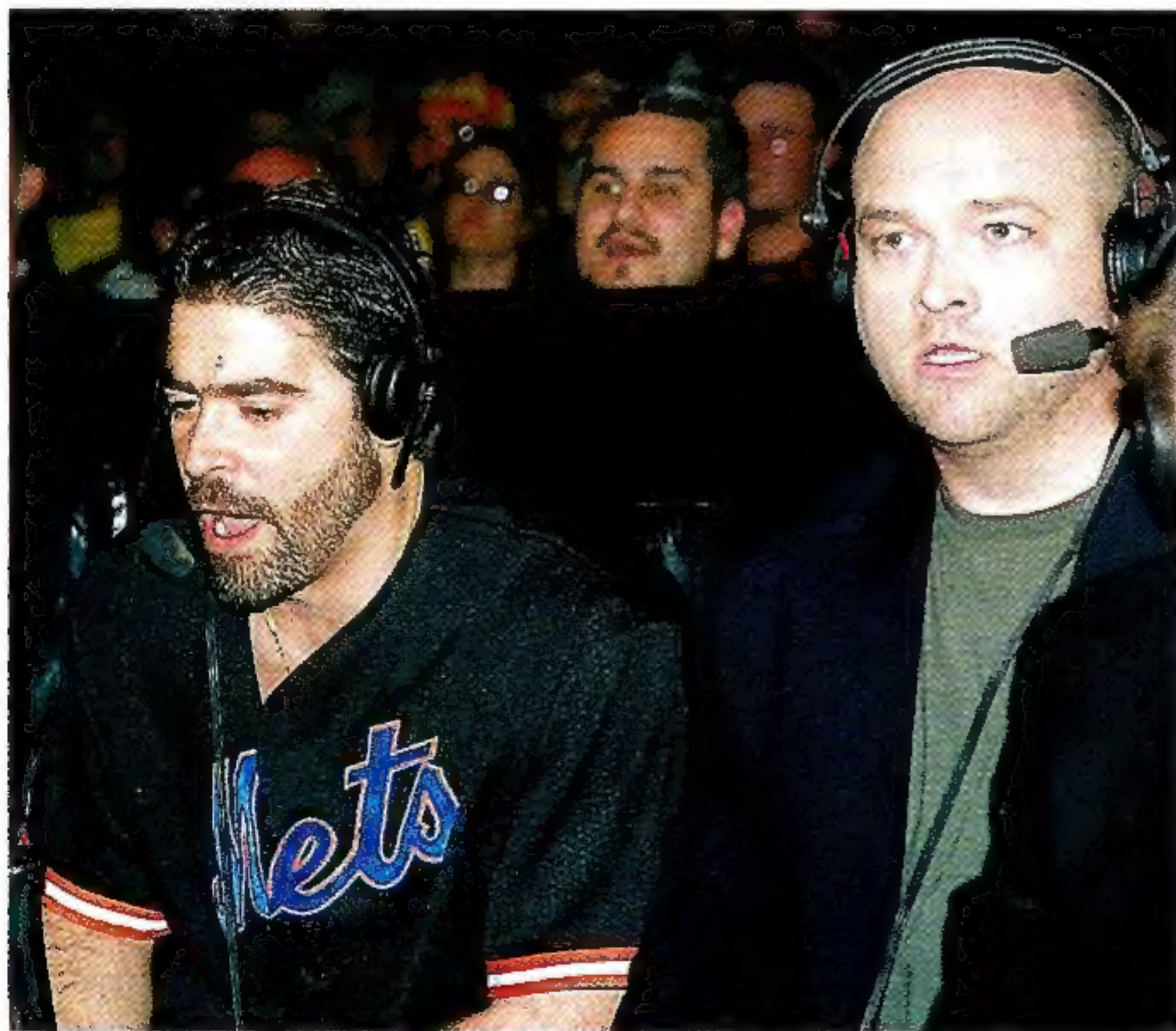
(Continued from page 12)

It's been almost five years since my last column. I have to tell you, it's rulebreaker nirvana out there. The New World Order had it like that, you know? They attacked people they didn't like and beat the crap out of 'em just because they could. Even Steve Austin, who I thought was really cool five years ago, has his good points. He's been too busy kissin' up to the fans in order to sell T-shirts, but I can understand that. I'm a businessman myself. Between the NWO and Steve Austin bustin' the rules all over the place, wrestling has changed forever.

Wrestling has a harder edge to it than it did five years ago. Back then, I thought Doink the Clown was hardcore. We didn't have that much to choose from. Now we have bad guys running the wrestling companies! Is that nirvana, or what? Vince McMahon, Eric Bischoff, and Vince Russo are cool. Even Paul Heyman is cool. By the way, let "Fast" Freddie give you an education. Heyman used to be known as Paul E. Dangerously, you know, the guy with the cell phone. Bet you didn't know that. He was way ahead of his time, too, because everybody has cell phones now. You know "The Fredster" has one.

All I'm saying is that times have changed—and for the better.

Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley is hot. I watched *Sunday Night Heat* the other night, getting myself up to date on the WWF, and I saw how *Heat* was live from WWF New York. It was cool. That's right. Steph is hot. *Heat* is cool.



Vince Russo (broadcasting with Scott Hudson) is my type of guy. He's ruthless, conniving, and downright despicable. If he only knew how to run a wrestling company, WCW would be in business!

One of the hostesses of the show, I don't know who she is, introduced Steph to the excited crowd. She introduced her by saying, "And this girl's twice my size, Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley!"

I don't know much about women, but I do know you never call them large. Steph came out with her mouth wide open because she couldn't believe what she heard. That tells you how dumb that hostess is. You don't go around insulting McMahaons if you want to work for the WWF.

There were two things that really struck me about that comment. One, that someone would be stupid enough to say it to someone as powerful as Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley. Two, that she wasn't fired right on the spot for saying it.

I guess that goes to show that Steph's more woman than even I thought possible. Most chicks, upon hearing such a comment, would get immediately catty—and Steph could have handed the girl her pink slip right there. She didn't, though, and that took guts—and a lot of self-confidence.

Here's my personal message to Stephanie: You should have fired her. Not because you were hurt by what she said, but just on principle. Next time someone crosses you, make 'em pay.

There's something about WCW that really sucks. I thought WCW was cool, especially with the NWO and dudes like that. But it has changed big time. I used to break open a bag of chips and watch *Nitro*. I even conned a buddy of mine into getting the pay-per-views. I don't know if it's the wrestlers, the announcers, or the storylines, but there's something really sucky about it.

Freddie has some advice for WCW. Listen up, because it could save your company. Here it is: WCW needs more interesting wrestlers and better storylines. Better ratings wouldn't hurt, either. I don't know why somebody like Bischoff or Russo hasn't thought of it. Somebody should put me in charge.

Here's more advice. Get rid of Tony Schiavone. Mark Madden and Jeremy Borash should be the announcing team. Madden is the best-looking big man on TV. I'd be a great partner for Madden because I'm a pretty good-looking big boy myself. Borash proved he has the skills to be a good announcer. He's always doing *WCW Live* and stuff. I still can't decide on Stevie Ray. His "Suckas Gots To Know" segment is cool. But I'm sick of how he sticks up for his brother, Booker T. That's lame.

Hey, "Fast" Freddie has to go. I'm gonna see my yak tonight because I got it like that. Word to your mutha! ☹

voice of reason

(Continued from page 14)

American at the University of Michigan through, again, hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. I bet Steiner skipped plenty of hot dates to practice takedowns or work out in the gym. By the time we reached the 1990s, he was considered the finest tag team specialist in the world.

That dedication remains apparent in some aspects of Steiner's life. He obviously does not take a shortcut when it comes to his training regimen or eating the right foods. I just don't understand why wrestling has to be the avenue in which he breaks the rules. He did all those drills back in college and did all those bench presses just to rely on a lead pipe? Heck, I could win a world title with a lead pipe. Picking and choosing the aspects of your life in which you're going to break the rules is inconsistent.

Edge and Christian. Yes, they're cutesy and clever. But are they rulebreakers of whom we can be proud? Brandi portrays rulebreakers as being wrestlers with a differing philosophy. The truth is that Edge and Christian's careers were going nowhere. After two years in the WWF, they weren't even close to the World tag team championship, while their

contemporaries—guys such as The Hardy Boyz, The Acolytes, and The Dudley Boyz—had all captured the gold at one time or another.

Was it scientific wrestling or fair play that held them back? No. It was their lack of experience, combined with a very competitive playing field. Eventually, they won the World tag team title from the Dudleys at WrestleMania 2000—through their own skills and natural talents. Their rulebreaking turn didn't take place until *after* WrestleMania, when they became intoxicated with the idea of remaining champions. They became arrogant, shallow, and "reeked of jerkitude." Integrity got them to the title. They've been jerks only since winning it. Rulebreaking isn't a philosophy. It's a human failing.

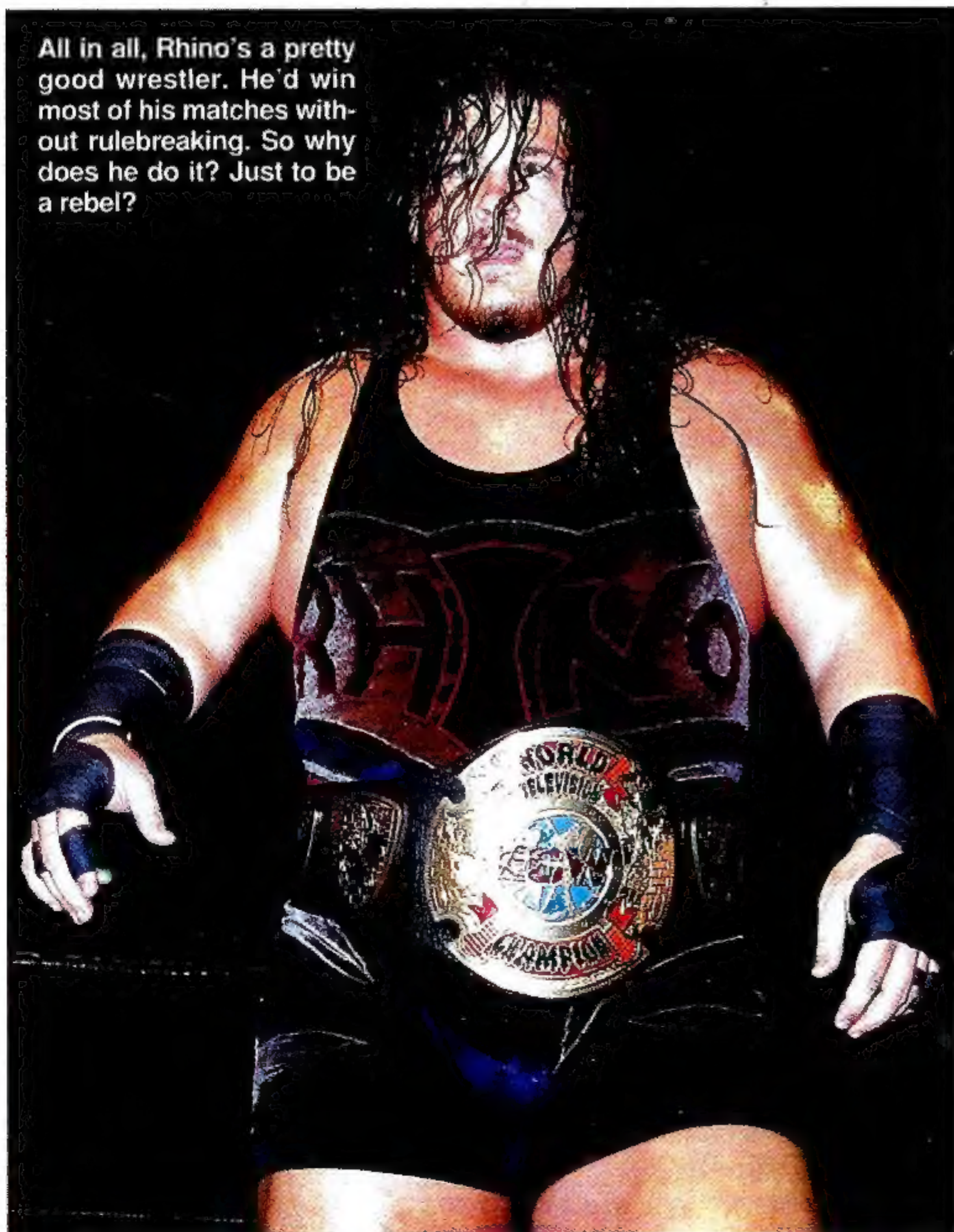
Rhino. Why does Rhino need to be a bad guy? He usually doesn't break rules to win his matches. True, he's a bully who will stoop to any depth, like goring a man's wife through a table. He's sadistic and mean. Why is that? Steve Austin and Bill Goldberg prove that wrestlers can be intense without being blatant rulebreakers.

Rulebreaking needs Rhino more than Rhino needs rulebreaking. He's been a pawn used by Cyrus, Justin Credible, and the rest of The Network. He's their trained pit bull, an overgrown mascot. Wouldn't Rhino's tackles, powerslams, and gores be just as effective if he were on the side of decency? He was a dominant ECW TV champion in 2000. There's no reason why he can't win the World title someday. Why does he need Cyrus and The Network? Aren't they more trouble than they're worth? I would think a loner like Rhino would want the spotlight for himself. Get rid of the hangers-on and be a man of character.

Those are only four examples that highlight the folly of rulebreaking. Set aside all the issues of whether rulebreaking is moral and examine it from a practical point of view. So many of today's wrestlers became superstars as competent, high-minded professionals. Then something happened when they approached the pinnacle. They took the shortcut. They became rulebreakers. For most of them, rulebreaking hasn't necessarily enhanced their careers. They've surrendered their integrity and decency for what? A few cheap victories. They've paid a high price for nothing.

I want your feedback. Let me know if you agree with my views, or give me a chance to set you straight. I'll print your letters and my responses in future issues. Write to "The Voice Of Reason," P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034 or send your e-mail to voicereason1@yahoo.com.

All in all, Rhino's a pretty good wrestler. He'd win most of his matches without rulebreaking. So why does he do it? Just to be a rebel?



dq hall of fame

BEST REMEMBERED AS "The Million-Dollar Man," Ted DiBiase had a love for rulebreaking that was even stronger than his love for big bucks ... Born on January 19, 1954, in Omaha, Nebraska ... The 6'4", 247-pounder is the son of wrestlers Mike DiBiase and Helen Hild ... His father died of a heart attack following a match against Man Mountain Mike on July 2, 1969, in Lubbock, Texas ... "Iron" Mike had already taught his son all of the basics, which

were refined by the Funks and the Briscos ... Ted attended West Texas State University on a football scholarship ... Lost to NWA junior heavyweight champ Danny Hodge in his 1974 debut ... Enjoyed hearing the fans' cheers while competing in Missouri ... Ah, the foolishness of youth ... Those chants of "Ted-dy! Ted-dy!" must have sounded nice while Harley Race and Bruiser Brody were stomping mud holes in him ... Won the Missouri State title twice and the WWF North American title once over the next few years ... The Fabulous Freebirds executed a spike piledriver on DiBiase in 1981, causing severe spinal damage ... DiBiase had learned too many dirty tricks and been played for a sucker too many times to remain "scientific" much longer ... Smartly turned against Junkyard Dog ... Became a rulebreaking kingpin in the Mid-South as the leader of The Rat Pack, a group that also included Mr. Olympia, Matt Borne, and Jim Duggan ... Spread his evil to Georgia, where he won the National title from Brett Sawyer ... Broke Bob Armstrong's face with a loaded glove, which became his trademark ... The bad but babyfaced DiBiase grew a beard to appear more menacing ... Worked well, too ... Brad Armstrong stole the National championship from



TED DIBIASE

OX BAKER

KEN PATERA

SGT. SLAUGHTER

EDDIE GILBERT

THE CRUSHER

DICK MURDOCH

RICK RUDE

MAD DOG VACHON

JOHN TOLOS

RAY STEVENS

PAMPERO FIRPO

NICK BOCKWINKEL

SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

DICK THE BRUISER

FABULOUS MOOLAH

BUDDY ROGERS

FRITZ VON ERICH

GEORGE STEELE

IVAN KOLOFF

KILLER KOWALSKI

GORGEOUS GEORGE

HARLEY RACE

THE SHEIK

FRED BLASSIE

BRUISER BRODY



A nice, hard elbow to the jaw from Ted DiBiase always hurt. And what face-painted freak is he totally dominating here? That would be Sting, back when he was known as Bladerunner Rock.

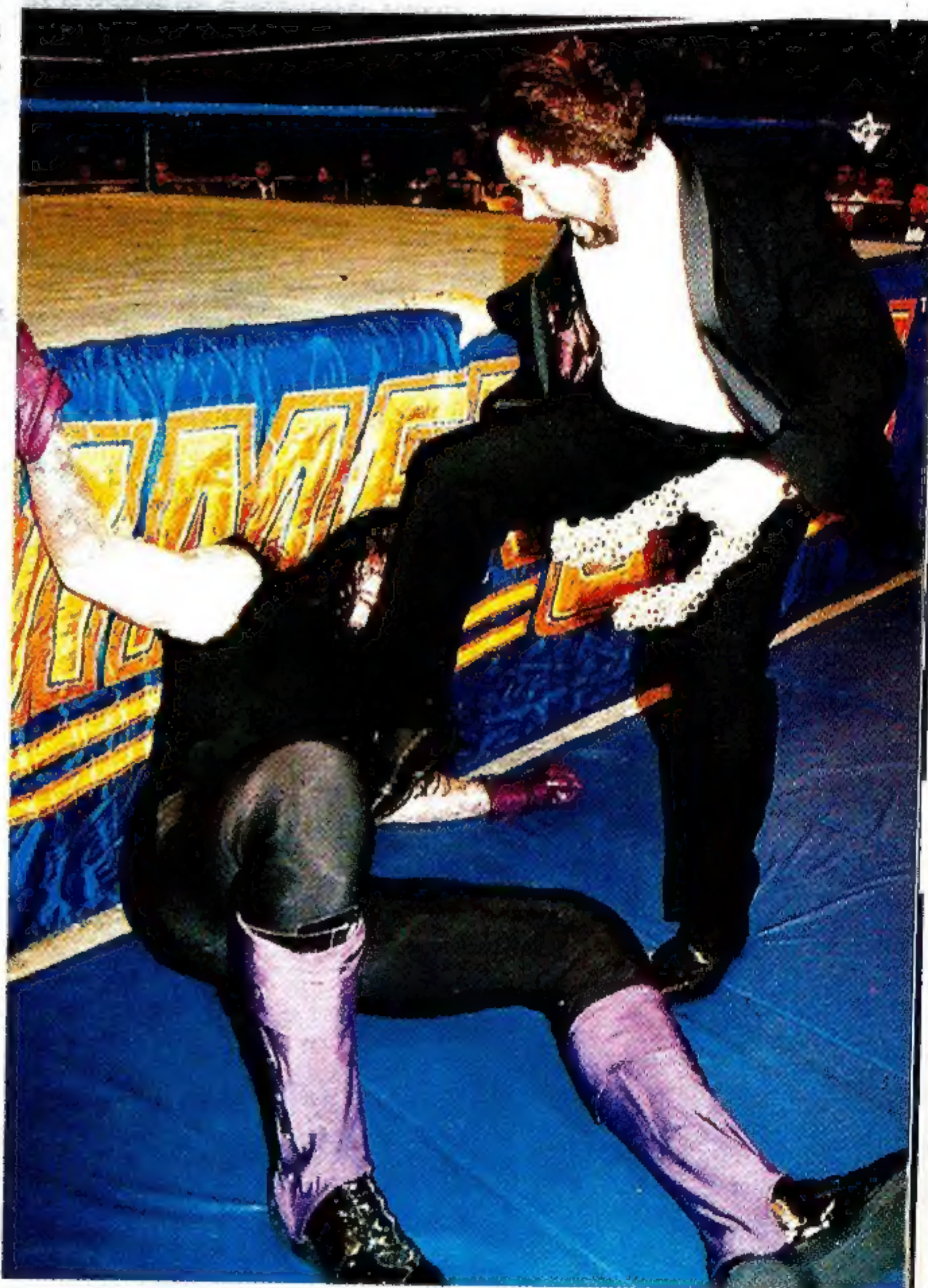
DiBiase should have won the WWF World title by trouncing Randy Savage in the finals of a tournament at WrestleMania IV, but Hulk Hogan had to get involved and help the helpless "Macho Man."



DiBiase with Tommy Rich's help ... Regained the National belt from The Spoiler on July 14, 1984 ... Lost the title to "Head Of Stone" Ronnie Garvin in Baltimore ... Captured the Mid-South tag team title with Hercules Hernandez and Steve Williams ... Avenged his National title loss by squashing Brad Armstrong for the Mid-South North American title on January 16, 1985, in Shreveport, Louisiana ... Old nemesis Dick Murdoch caused additional spinal damage by piledriving DiBiase on the concrete floor ... There must have been brain damage, too, because DiBiase and Williams began kissing up to the fans for a while ... A call from the WWF and a financial windfall screwed DiBiase's head on straight again ... "The Million-Dollar Man" was officially born ... "Everybody's got a price!" cackled DiBiase ... Paid Dave Hebner to switch places with his identical twin brother, Earl, to referee a match between WWF champ Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant on February 5, 1988 ... Dave "helped" Andre win the title from the "Huckster" ... DiBiase purchased the title belt from Andre ... Dopey WWF President Jack Tunney declared the championship vacant and scheduled a tournament for WrestleMania IV ... DiBiase lost to Randy Savage in the finals, thanks to that same "Huckster's" interference ... He and his accountant, Irwin R. Schyster (Mike Rotundo), held the WWF World tag team title on three occasions ... Their 1993 war with the Steiner brothers was a classic ... DiBiase captured the All-Japan

International tag team title with Stan Hansen in September of that year ... Unfortunately, DiBiase's sensational 20-year career ended because of his chronic neck injuries ... Founded The Million-Dollar Corporation, a stable that included, among others, Irwin R. Schyster, Bam Bam Bigelow, The Evil Undertaker, King Kong Bundy, Tatanka, and The 1-2-3 Kid (X-Pac) ... Was Steve Austin's manager when Austin debuted in the WWF as The Ringmaster ... Even awarded Austin his old Million-Dollar belt ... Was forced to leave the WWF after Austin lost a Caribbean strap match to Savio Vega in May 1996 ... A few months later, it was revealed that DiBiase was the financial backer of WCW's New World Order ... DiBiase was the evil genius of the NWO in its prime, guiding the careers of Hollywood Hogan, Scott Hall, Kevin Nash, Syxx (X-Pac), and many others ... DiBiase has since stated his rule-breaking professional life didn't complement his religious personal life ... Helped the Steiners against the NWO for a while before leaving WCW ... Returned as a color commentator for

the short-lived WXP in late-1999 ... DiBiase's in-ring career was too short, but his ruthless exploits remain an inspiration to today's generation of bad guys ... It is for that wicked legacy that we proudly induct Mr. DiBiase into the DQ Hall of Fame ... We'll have an evil laugh in his honor.



Even after his in-ring career ended, DiBiase did some dastardly deeds. As head of his Million-Dollar Corporation, he delighted in stomping on jackasses like The Undertaker.